

E111b

# *Salvation*

## *in Hinduism and Christianity.*

A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST

BY

**WILHELM DILGER,**

BASEL GERMAN EV. MISSION

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN ORIGINAL INTO ENGLISH

BY

**Miss LUISE ØEHLER**



MANGALORE

BASEL MISSION BOOK AND TRACT DEPOSITORY

1908



*Motto:* "Seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe."

*1 Corinthians I, 21.*

## PREFACE

The present volume is the translation of a treatise in German that was written in response to an invitation in 1897 of a Missionary Conference in the kingdom of Saxony for a prize essay on 'the leading religious and philosophic views of the Hindus according to the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Brahmanic (especially the Vedanta) philosophy, and an estimate of the same from a Christian point of view'. The essay was to be based on a knowledge of the Sacred Books of the Hindus and kindred literature in accordance with the results of modern Sanskrit scholarship; and this was to be shown by 'the economical use of carefully selected and thoroughly elucidated quotations in the original, if possible, but at all events in accurate translation'. It was recommended that the treatise should be confined to the leading features of Brahmanism or Hinduism, such as the conceptions 'of God, the world, man, transmigration and especially liberation'; and it was expected to include a short exposition of Christian truth in comparison with the corresponding features of the Hindu religion. This Christian part of the treatise, it was stated, might be confined to a simple presentation of the Christian religion as a means of salvation for all, which should be based on the Bible, the facts of sacred history recorded in it, and on Christian experience. In this way the subject matter as well as the method of treatment was somewhat definitely determined for the author, but fortunately, it may be added, in accordance with his own views.

The jury was composed of three German University Professors: Dr. WINDISCH and Dr. LINDNER at Leipzig, and Dr. VON SCHREDER, then at Innsbruck, now at Vienna, all of them well-known authorities in Sanskrit scholarship. From among eight essays that were submitted and of which five were written in German and three in English, the German original of the present book was unanimously recommended for the prize.

In his work as a missionary the author himself had long felt the want of such a book; and for about twenty years his intense interest and continual study had turned upon the subject of Hindu religion and philosophy, so that, when the above invitation reached him, he felt it his duty to respond to it. He is, however, well aware of the defects of his treatise, which only want of leisure prevents him from trying to supply. Above all, he knows well that his estimate of Hinduism differs very much from that taken by Professor Deussen. It would have been much more agreeable to him to tell educated Hindus that they were in possession of divine truth for the salvation of their souls than to point out the failure of Hinduism in this most essential respect. But it is not unknown to him that among the Hindus themselves there are many who in their heart of hearts harbour a profound distrust of the Vedanta philosophy, because they cannot shut their eyes to the fact that history has passed an unmistakable and irrevocable judgement on that philosophy. And to those that have eyes to see, the verdict of history in favour of the truth of Christianity is no less emphatic and distinct. The author yields to no one in his love of India and hearty sympathy with her people. For that very reason he felt it his sacred duty to state plainly what he believes to be the truth with regard to Hinduism and Christianity: *'Amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas'*. He ventures, however, to believe that, in some measure,

he may have succeeded in 'speaking truth in love'. May truth prevail and, in God's good providence, bring about the regeneration of India and the salvation of her people.

It yet remains for the author to offer his hearty thanks to the translator Miss L. Ochler, Tübingen, Germany; to the Rev. H. Gulliford, Secretary, Christian Literature Society, Madras, who very kindly undertook to revise the manuscript and to assist in reading a considerable part of the proofs; to the Rev. A. C. Clayton, Wesleyan Missionary Society, South-India, who read the remaining portion of the proofs when the Rev. H. Gulliford went on furlough in March 1907; and — last not least — to the late Mr. Ralph T. H. GRIFFITH, M. A., C. I. E., etc., and Messrs. E. J. LAZARUS AND Co., Benares, for their kind permission to quote the hymns of the R̥ig- and Atharvaveda from an English translation prepared by the former and published by the latter, 1897. Unfortunately the author also was obliged to leave India, before the whole had passed through the press. On this account not only has the publication of the book been considerably delayed, but also some errors have crept in, which the kind reader is asked generously to excuse.

TÜBINGEN (GERMANY),

*Wilhelm Dilger.*

*November 1907.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pages.

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1—21

## Part I. The Theological Basis of Salvation:

### The Conception of the Godhead.

#### I. THE CONCEPTION OF THE GODHEAD IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

1. *The Vedic Gods* . . . . . 25—81

Dyaushpitar 25; Aditi 28; the Ādityas: Varuṇa 30; Mitra 35; Sūrya 40; Aryaman 42; Savitar 44; Ushas 46; The Āśvins 47; Agni 50; Indra 54; Brahmanāspati-Bṛihaspati 63; Rudra 67; The Maruts 70; Vāyu and Vāta 71; Monotheism or Polytheism? 76; Kathenotheism? 79.

2. *The Absolute Self of Theosophical Speculation* . . . . . 81—111

Search after Unity 82; the Golden Germ 84; Puruṣa 86; Brahman 87; Skambha 88; Sūtra 90; Ātman 92; how to know the Brahman? 93; the nature of Brahman 95; absolute existence 96; absolute light 101; bliss 102; impersonal 105; without moral attributes 110.

3. *The Conception of the Godhead in the Philosophic Schools* . . . . . 112—145

The Sankhya on the Godhead 112; the Yoga on the Godhead 114; the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad on the Godhead 116; the Mahābhārata conception of the Godhead 117; the Bhagavadgītā conception of the Godhead 118; the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika on the Godhead 121; the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā on the Godhead 122; the Vedānta conception of the Godhead 123; Sacchidānanda 123; three kinds of existence 124; Prātibhāsika 125; Vyāvahārika 125; Pāramārthika 126; lower and higher Brahma knowledge 126; absolute monism 129; the Brahman unknowable 130; knowable by Samyagdarśana? 131; knowledge of the Brahman unprofitable 133; Bhakti reaction against monism 137; Rāmānuja's teaching 137; Udayanāchārya's teaching 139; Swāmi Vivekānanda's teaching 141; elements of truth in Hindu philosophy 143.

II. THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD.	Pages.
1. <i>The Unity of God</i> . . . . .	146—153
God's revelation to Abraham 146; to Israel 148; Old Testament monotheism no natural growth 149; the New Testament on God's unity 152.	
2. <i>God—the Personal Spirit</i> . . . . .	153—160
Jehovah as revealed to Moses 154; God a self-conscious person 156; the objections of pantheism 158; other attributes of God, as the Absolute Spirit 159.	
3. <i>God—Holy Love</i> . . . . .	160—172
God's holiness 160; God's righteousness 164; God's love 166; Christian faith and modern science 169.	

## Part II. The Cosmological Pre-supposition of Salvation:

### The Conception of the World.

#### I. THE CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

1. <i>Creation and Preservation in the Vedic Hymns</i> .	175—190
The Architect of the Universe 176; the Lord of Creatures 180; cosmogony and theogony 182; the Nāsadiya Sūkta 184; the Purusha Sūkta 186; preservation 188.	
2. <i>The Cosmogonic Speculations of the Upanishads</i> .	190—215
Origin of the world from Brahman 190; emanation 192; five Selves 197; Māyā as intermediate cause 201; Māyāvāda or Parīṇāmavāda? 202; Brahman uniting with Māyā 207; results of this union 208; preservation and government by Brahman 211; dissolution in the Brahman 213.	
3. <i>The Dualist and Monist Conception of the World in the Philosophic Schools</i> . . . . .	215—262
Vaiśeṣika view of the world 215; Sāṅkhya view of the world 218; Vedānta view of the world 233; motive for creation 234; cause of creation 235; implements of creation? 236; the exoteric world-picture 237; monism—Advaita 242; Avidyā and Māyā 245; Adhyāropa and Apavāda 254; Tatvamasi 256; Ahambrahmāsmi 258	

## II. THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD. Pages.

### 1. *The Christian Doctrine of Creation in its Relation to Indian Views* . . . . . 263—270

Rays of light in Hindu views 263; lost in darkness 264; a good motive in the Vedānta view 264; some truth in the Sāṅkhya view 266; the Christian view of creation 267; God's love the motive 268; relative independence of the world 269.

### 2. *The Biblical Account of Creation. Man the Image of God* . . . . . 270—282

Creation of heaven and earth 270; the restitution theory 271; creation by the word of God 272; the six days' work 273; creation of man; image of God 274; man the crown of creation 277; the Bible narrative and science 277; creation and evolution 279; some details of the Bible narrative 280; the narrative and other cosmogonies 282.

### 3. *Preservation and Government of the World* . . . 283—288

God the Ruler and Sustainer 283; creation and preservation 283; problems connected with it 285; God's government and human sin 286.

## Part III. The Anthropological Necessity of Salvation:

### The Conception of Evil.

#### I. THE CONCEPTION OF EVIL IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

### 1. *Consciousness of Sin in the Vedic Hymns* . . . 291—301

Sin in the Vasishṭha Hymns 292; sin the violation of Varuṇa's ordinances 295; sin a substance clinging to man? 297; Agni burning away sin 298; sin in later Vedic literature 300.

### ✓ 2. *Sin and Evil in the Upanishads* . . . . . 301—319

The conception of sin in the Upanishads 302; metempsychosis 304; origin of the idea 306; time of its growth in India 307; repeated births and deaths 309; the Brihadāraṇyaka and Chhāndogya on transmigration 310; the five sacrificial fires—the descent of the soul 311; the path of the Gods 312; the path of the Fathers 312; the third place 314; similes concerning metempsychosis 316; the law of recompense 317; the Brahman causing metempsychosis 318.

	Pages.
✓ 3. <i>The Dogma of Transmigration in the Philosophic Schools</i> . . . . .	319—345

The conception of evil in the Sāṅkhya 319; the Mahābhārata on the growth of moral evil 321; throwing responsibility on God 322; Vedānta conception of moral evil 324; the exoteric point of view 324; the esoteric point of view 326; transmigration in the epic Sāṅkhya 328; the doctrine of recompense examined 329; the Yoga on transmigration 330; the Vaiśeṣika conception of evil 331; Vedānta view of metempsychosis 332; the exoteric point of view 332; the punishments of hell and the third place 337; the doctrine of metempsychosis examined 344.

## II. THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF EVIL.

1. <i>The Biblical Conception of Sin</i> . . . . .	346—366
--	---------

General notion of sin 346; the law written in man's heart 347; the law of the Old Testament 348; judgement of sin in the Old Testament 351; God's law revealed in Jesus Christ 352; Christ's testimony against sin 353; the sin of unbelief 354; sin against the Spirit 356; the testimony of the Apostles against sin; St. Peter's testimony 358; St. James's testimony 359; St. John's testimony 360; St. Paul's teaching concerning sin 360; man a slave to sin 363; the flesh 364.

2. <i>The Origin of Sin and Original Sin</i> . . . . .	366—374
--	---------

The Bible narrative of the fall 366; its bearing on the origin of sin 368; the nature of sin 369; the development of sin 370; the propagation of sin 371.

3. <i>The Punishment of Sin and Evil</i> . . . . .	374—383
--	---------

Evil the consequence of sin 374; nothing unreasonable in the Biblical view 377; the problem of innocent suffering in the Bible 378; the final punishment of sin 381.

## Part IV. The Nature of Salvation:

### The Conception of the Chief Good.

#### I. THE CONCEPTION OF THE CHIEF GOOD

##### IN HINDUISM.

1. <i>The Heavenly Worlds of the Vedic Hymns</i> . . . . .	387—392
--	---------

The idea of liberation foreign to the Hymns 388; hope of heavenly life in the Hymns 389; happiness and joy of heaven 390; union with individual gods 392.



2. *The Immortality of the Brahman World in the Upanishads* . . . . . Pages. 393—403

Hope of a life in the heavenly worlds 393; the Brahman-world 395; immortality 397; impersonal union with the Brahman 402.

3. *Liberation the 'Chief Good' of the Philosophic Schools* . . . . . 403—424

According to the Sāṅkhya proper 403; according to the epic Sāṅkhya 404; Nirvāṇa in Brahmanism and Buddhism 406; liberation according to the later Sāṅkhya and Yoga 409; according to the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika 410; according to the Vedānta 411; liberated in this life 415; heavenly glory of the pious 418; liberation examined 422.

## II. CHRISTIANITY THE HIGHEST GOOD.

1. *Its Preliminary Stage in the Old Testament* . . . 425—432

The kingdom of God beginning with Abraham 426; the kingdom of God in Israel 427; the kingdom of God a promise for the future 429.

2. *The Kingdom of God in the Preaching of Jesus* . . 432—441

The kingdom of God a present salvation 432; the kingdom of God the chief good 435; its future consummation 436; the kingdom of God in the Gospel of St. John 437; the kingdom of God a moral boon 438.

3. *Fellowship with God through Christ in the Testimony of the Apostles* . . . . . 441—453

St. Paul's teaching 442; St. Peter's and St. John's teaching 446; the consummation of the kingdom of God in the Revelation 449; comparison of Hindu liberation and Christian salvation 450.

## Part V. The Way of Salvation:

### The Attainment of the Supreme Good.

#### I. THE WAY OF SALVATION IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

1. *The Way of Sacrificial Works* . . . . . 457—461

Sacrifices not the way to heaven in the Rīgveda 458; the road to heaven in the Atharvaveda and Brāhmaṇas 459; and in the Upanishads 460.

✓ 2. <i>The Way of Wisdom and Asceticism</i> . . . . .	462—477
--	---------

True knowledge the means of liberation 462; preparation for true knowledge 464; self-mortification 467; practice of Yoga 468; use of the syllable Om 470; instruction by a teacher 471; the way to the Brahman-world 475.

✓ 3. <i>The Various Ways of Philosophic Hinduism</i> . . . . .	477—509
--	---------

The way of knowledge according to Sāṅkhya 477; pre-requisites of true knowledge 480; necessity of a teacher 481; the yoga way of liberation 482; the way of liberation in the Bhagavadgītā 487; liberation by bhakti in the Śāṇḍilya Sūtras 491; other Indian teachers of bhakti 493; the way of knowledge according to the Vedānta 494; liberation not by works 494; liberation only by knowledge 496; knowledge by the grace of God? 498; knowledge not an addition to the way of works 500; knowledge itself not a work 501; by true knowledge alone 502; the means of obtaining true knowledge 503.

## II. THE WAY OF SALVATION IN CHRISTIANITY.

1. <i>Its Divine Preparation</i> . . . . .	510—522
--	---------

Old Testament atonement for sin 511; the perfect sacrifice for sin promised 512; the perfect sacrifice in Christ's death 514; the teaching of St. Paul on Christ's death 516; the testimony of St. Peter and St. John 520; the testimony of the Epistle to the Hebrews 521.

2. <i>Man's Entrance to that Way</i> . . . . .	522—533
--	---------

The demand of faith in the Old Testament 523; repentance and faith required by Jesus 524; St. Paul's teaching concerning faith 527; St. Peter's and St. John's testimony concerning faith 532.

3. <i>Retrospect and Conclusion</i> . . . . .	533—537
---	---------



## INTRODUCTION.

*Prabuddha Bhārata*, i. e., Awakened India, is the title of a magazine, published formerly at Madras, but now at Almora on the slopes of the Himālayas, the purpose of which is to promote the regeneration of the religious life of the Indian people. The title is highly characteristic and suggestive. In the first place, it implies that, up to this time, India has been asleep. This is indeed an incontestable fact. For many centuries deep sleep has encompassed the races and tribes comprised under the name of Hindus or Indians.

Once these peoples possessed a highly developed civilisation, which as its finest blossom produced an extensive literature. This civilisation was based on a distinctive religion, and religion was also the centre round which clustered the substance of the writings which, in the course of centuries, came into existence. This literature is thoroughly original, both in the conception and the development of its subject matter, and its style and diction are vivid and impressive.

Ancient India had also independent political organisations of its own. In the North and the South indigenous kingdoms flourished under mighty native princes, although there never was one united Indian empire, nor even a united Āryan nation, such as Young India loves to describe in glowing colours in his enthusiastic speeches. The essential foundations of national unity, however, were existent in Ancient India. She possessed a common mental culture, a common literature which exercised a powerful influence on the whole national life, a religion vigorous enough to appropriate the religious ideas and ceremonies of subject tribes and to return them to those races in a new form. It cannot be denied that in those ancient times vigorous intellectual life and activity were characteristic of the Āryan tribes of India.

But how different is the picture presented to us in our own days! After long centuries of despotic, tyrannical rule by foreign Muhammadan invaders, Christian Great Britain has become the heir of this political development, a people, whose ancestors, as Young India is pleased to assert, were still leading the life of savages, when the Āryan civilisation of Ancient India had already attained a high degree of excellence. India's political independence is gone, and gone is also that creative power of the intellect to which we owe the treasures of Sanskrit literature. Up to our own time the descendants and heirs of those sages, who built up system after system of a distinctive philosophy, are content to commit to memory the science and literature of England, and to apply them mechanically to the requirements of their work and to the present needs of their nation. In the sphere of intellectual originality there has prevailed up to this day a heavy, paralysing sleep, if not complete death.

Similarly religion has lost its true active life and its quickening power, so that nothing is left but the law of inert persistence. It is true that the old Vedic hymns are even now muttered at morning and evening prayers; but they are no longer generally understood, and the honest among the educated acknowledge that these devotions do not deserve to be called prayer or worship and that they are not capable of quickening and comforting the heart. The common-places of the Vedānta philosophy are preserved like fossilised organisms belonging to earlier periods of creation, and like the rites and ceremonies of popular Hinduism they have no longer any real life in them. If criticism happens to attack the gross idolatry, the popular belief in the three hundred and thirty millions of gods, or the superstitious ceremonies of their worship, it is sure to excite a good deal of sympathetic laughter.

The doctrines of the Vedānta are now known but to a few, and even to them only in part; while those who know them do not always really understand them. It is often only after

life has, in a moral sense, become a failure, that modern Hindus will take refuge in the assertion that everything is illusion (*māyā*), that both good and evil come from God, that God and man are one and the same being. Till recently, those who had drunk from the cup of European culture were the most indifferent to their ancestral religion. What made them cling to Hinduism was the law of inert persistence in the form of a rigid caste-system, to break the iron fetters of which they had neither the strength nor the desire. But these also feel the lack of power and life in their religion most strongly, and, as a rule, frankly acknowledge that their people, their religion, and their ancient civilisation require to be awakened and imbued with new life.

But now the watchword is *Prabuddha Bhārata*, and it is an undeniable fact that to-day India is awakened or at least beginning to awake. The names of Rām Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandar Sen, Dewan Bahadur Raghunātha Rao, Swāmi Vivekānanda and others indicate in historical order the particular phases of this remarkable awakening from a long and deep torpor. First came, ushered in by the two first-named leaders, the *Brahma-samāj*, trying to interpret the old Vedas and especially the Upanishads as containing an enlightened Theism, and to call back the nation sunk in idolatry and superstition to the purity of its ancestral religion. The *Brahma-samāj* still exists, though it has split up into different sections, while other movements of a similar nature have been inaugurated, such as the *Prārthana-samāj* (Society of Prayer) and the *Ārya-samāj* (Āryan Society). Then came *Social Reform* with Dewan Bahadur Raghunātha Rao and others, which, with very little success and hoping against hope, sustains a hard struggle with the evils of caste and other social customs. Next came the *Theosophical Society*, represented by Madame Blavatzky, a Russian impostor of great talent, by Colonel Olcott, an American gentleman as credulous as he is bellicose and eloquent, and of late by Mrs. Annie Besant, an English lady who, with insinuating eloquence, calls back the sons of India to the too

long ignored treasures of Āryan religion and philosophy. Last of all came the great religious exhibition at Chicago, the World's Parliament of Religions, which suddenly revealed Swāmi Vivekānanda as the prophet of Hinduism, who now, in his turn, relying on authorities like Professor Paul Deussen and others, with great enthusiasm and still greater rhetoric began to preach the re-discovered Vedānta wisdom, Yoga asceticism, and "universal Hindu religion" to circles of American ladies and gatherings of Indian students.

With these popular voices from East and West are united very weighty testimonies from the circles of European scholarship. Professor Paul Deussen of Kiel, who first published a scholarlike exposition of the Vedānta system and then studied it in the country of its birth, raises his voice in praise of this ancient mystic monism and in his parting address tells his Indian friends that "the Vedānta, in its unfalsified form, is the strongest support of pure morality, the greatest consolation in the sufferings of life and death,—Indians, keep to it".<sup>1</sup> And Max Müller, the famous linguist and student of comparative religion, in one of his more popular essays on this subject, bestows unstinted praise on the Vedānta, and declares, more politely, of course, than correctly, that the ultimate aim of the Vedānta is the same as the highest good of Christianity. Even in the Anglo-Indian press retired civil servants and other amateurs, relying on the views of Kant and Schopenhauer, proclaim Vedānta metaphysics as a panacea for all the evils of a worn out Western civilisation, and they find believing readers.

How could India continue in its slumber, when roused by so many powerful voices? Some of her sons, at least, are awakened in a certain sense; and they are up and doing. The above mentioned magazine, *Prabuddha-Bhārata*, is only one of the many signs of a new era. Similar papers serving the same cause, either in English or in the Vernacular, are springing

---

<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 337.

up like mushrooms. *The Brahma Philosopher, The Light of Truth, The Teacher of Wisdom, The Dawn, The Moonlight of Knowledge* — these are only a few of the highly suggestive names of these numerous publications. They all overflow with the praise of Āryan antiquity and especially of the Vedānta philosophy, which, they say, can alone satisfy the needs of modern educated men, and is far above all other religions and philosophies, all of which, however, are already comprised in it or might easily be absorbed by it.

Neither is there a lack of more voluminous publications in the shape of books. The lectures of Swāmi Vivekānanda and other writers of the same school, as well as various dilutions of the results of modern research, are published and distributed with great zeal. The *Brahmavādin* and similar papers teem with modern swāmis, whose sayings are eagerly reduced to writing and published throughout the world as so many oracles.

Awakened India has also commenced missionary operations with great energy. It is well known that Swāmi Vivekānanda zealously tried to propagate his renovated Vedāntism in England and America, although his success was not so great as he himself tried to make his countrymen believe. Missionary stations have been opened in America, Australia and England; in different places ardent followers of the Swāmi deliver courses of lectures on Vedāntism, and the *Brahmavādin* every month publishes more or less definite information about the progress of this missionary enterprise.

Though the signs of India's awakening are as numerous as they are distinct and promising, the leaders of the movement still feel the need — and most of the signs mentioned bear witness to this — of still further arousing Mother India from her slumber. The leaders cannot but acknowledge that the great mass of the people are not yet aroused, nay, that they have not even heard the call. They are honest enough to see that India is suffering from a deep seated disease which ought to be cured. And they believe they know the remedy. However



praiseworthy this may be, they should remember that a physician who knows his business must first of all try to find out and remove the cause of the disease. What then are the causes of this disease from which the Indian people are suffering?

To say that the cause lies in their having forgotten or neglected the religion and philosophy of their ancestors, would be to name the symptom instead of the cause. The educated Hindus will say that it was the Muhammadan conquest which dealt this rude blow at the Indian people from the stunning effects of which it has not yet recovered. There may be some truth in this. The religion of the Prophet of Medina was nowhere like a stream of water that would carry lasting life and blessing. Nevertheless this explanation mistakes the effect for the cause. The Muhammadan conquest was only a consequence of the weakness and decay which had already set in. Had India in those days not felt the paralysing effect of mental sleep, she would certainly have been able to ward off the invasions of Muhammadan armies for ever.

It seems to us that the cause of the disease lies much deeper. The sages of the Upanishads and the philosophers of the Vedānta consider the state of deep, dreamless sleep, or rather a state of unconsciousness beyond dreamless sleep, as the *summum bonum* of their aspirations. Their whole wisdom is comprised in this aim, *i.e.*, dissolution into the unconscious Brahman; and even in this life they try to prepare for, and realise, this end by means of a stupefying asceticism in the solitude of the forests. Here is the draught which caused the Indian people to sink into their deep torpor. And now, according to the prescription of the advocates of Neo-Hinduism, this same philosophy is to be the means of awakening the Indian people to new life. That is indeed a bold application of the homœopathic treatment. To those familiar with the facts of the case, there can be no doubt with regard to the result of this attempt. A quietist philosophy, whose practical aim is dissolution into the unconscious Brahman, and which

considers indolent brooding over fixed doctrinal formulas as the best way to that end, can never vivify and keep alive the great mass of the people. Do not the educated Hindus themselves say that their religion itself requires to be filled with new life? Now he who stands in need of this belongs to the dead himself and cannot restore others to new life.

In this connection another question suggests itself. If it cannot be denied that Young India is preparing to shake off its torpor, we must ask, Who aroused it from its slumber? It was certainly not the Vedānta philosophy. Neither was it, in the first place, those European scholars who now sound the praises of Vedāntism. Speaking generally, we may say that India owes her awakening to Western civilisation. In spite of the partial failure of Western education, which we hear so many deplore in our days, the literature, science, and philosophy of Western nations have produced a quickening effect on the life of the Indian people. It is in that way also that the attention of Young India was drawn to the treasures of its own Sanskrit literature, and that this literature was made accessible. Even what Swāmi Vivekānanda proclaimed to the world as ancient Indian philosophy was nothing but a strange mixture of fragments of Vedānta philosophy and Western science. Besides, the English language was his medium of communication with his countrymen and with his American audiences. He owed all this to his English education. But Western education was first brought to India by Christian missionaries. The earliest places of Western education in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were mission schools. And even now the schools and colleges of the different missionary societies occupy the foremost rank among the educational institutions of India. Swāmi Vivekānanda himself is said to have owed his English education to a mission school. His speeches also betrayed a more or less intimate acquaintance with the Bible and Christianity. Here is the source from which Young India has received its best impulses for new life and activity.

There is yet another way in which Christianity has had a quickening and fertilising influence on the life of the Indian people in general, and on the Neo-Vedāntist movement in particular. If the leaders of this movement were to reflect for a moment and ascertain the cause of their activity, they would have to confess that what they call the awakening of India would have been impossible without the work of Protestant Missions and the influence of Christianity. It is in reality the spirit of opposition to the progress of Christianity, and anxiety for the imperilled condition of their ancestral religion, that have summoned these champions to the battle-field. Christianity has furnished them with the best of their weapons, and their methods are an imitation of Protestant missionary work. Far be it from us to find fault with them for this. But modern Hindus ought to remember one thing: the medicine which can fill India with new life is more likely to flow from that source from which already so much blessing has come to them and their country, than from the broken cisterns of Vedāntism.

Of course, it would require a brave determination to acknowledge this fact, for a world of prejudices, fed by ignorance, would have to be overcome. Some of these friends may be able to talk about everything possible and impossible, they may be tolerably well versed in the literature and sciences of the West; but, as a rule, they have no thorough knowledge either of their own religion or of Christianity. Some twenty years ago Dewan Bahadur Raghunātha Rao, who was then considered an authority in religious matters, published a so-called Catechism of the Āryan Religion. Upon examination, the tract was found to be made up of extracts from the Shorter Catechism of the Church of Scotland, which, of course, neither in its origin nor in its contents had anything to do with the religion of the ancient Āryans. In the course of a discussion on this catechism carried on in the press, our friend declared that the Bible and the Vedas contained several doctrines in common, such as the Fatherhood of God, the

Brotherhood of man; but the Bible, being of a more recent date than the Vedas, must have borrowed from them. With all due respect to our venerable friend, we cannot refrain from saying that such assertions can only bring a smile to the face of those who know both the Bible and the Vedas. In fact, they reveal a most deplorable ignorance of both.

This harmless illusion is, however, brought to a sudden end by the Neo-Vedāntist movement. The leaders of this movement frankly avow that its purpose is the complete restitution of Hinduism and of all that is peculiar to the Hindu religion in all its phases. Even polytheism and the idolatry connected with it are ardently defended. We must consider it a real gain, if this latest trend of thought makes men like Dewan Bahadur Raghunātha Rao understand that what they are pleased to call the Āryan religion, does not belong to the kernel, but to the shell of Hinduism.

Of course, among the leaders and adherents of the Neo-Vedāntist movement the knowledge of Christianity is possibly even smaller and more superficial. And their rapturous delight in the newly discovered greatness of their ancestral religion and philosophy will, for the present, prevent them from making a thorough study of the Bible, although those very people are profuse in their advice to missionaries to engage in the study of comparative religion. In Protestant missionary institutions many of them have made a slight acquaintance with the Bible and Christianity. But those who have worked in that field, or moved among Hindus educated in our mission schools, must be aware how insufficient this work is; how superficial, sometimes, the impressions produced by the Gospel are; and how soon they disappear. Unfortunately Protestant missions have not been able as yet to do all the work that is necessary to keep the impressions made at school fresh and to deepen them. But above all, Protestant missions, whatever the causes may have been, have as yet but seldom attempted to institute a detailed literary

comparison of the leading features of Higher Hinduism with the fundamental truths of Christianity.

Not that literary attempts in this field are quite wanting. The Christian Literature Society and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge have occasionally published valuable contributions towards the solution of this problem. It is, however, to be regretted that many of these publications do not touch the essential points of these problems, but rather treat of subjects lying on the circumference. Besides, these writings often have the form of compilations, which perhaps does not suit the taste of educated Indians. At all events, in most of these writings Christian truth is only introduced at the end, as a kind of appendix, so that its organic connection and especially the hidden threads which connect Christianity with the Hindu religion, and certainly with the fundamental religious wants of the Indian people, are not sufficiently sought out and made visible. Often details more or less foreign to the subject are brought up for comparison, which sometimes leaves the impression that the main point has been missed.

In our time circumstances seem to be favourable for the undertaking of a more comprehensive comparison of the leading features of Hinduism and Christianity. The new movement inaugurated by Swāmi Vivekānanda has powerfully brought to notice the philosophic aspect and the higher teachings of Hinduism. As these may be considered as the highest expression of the religious instincts and needs of man, they are very well suited, certainly much more so than the so-called popular Hinduism with its idolatry and superstition, for a comparison with Christianity, furnishing points of contact with Christian truth and means for its exposition. By the new movement the interest for such a comparison has been aroused, and it is to be hoped it will attract the attention of educated Hindus. May we not also hope that such representations may lead some of them to Christ, our common Saviour? At any rate, the setting forth in writing of Christian truth as compared with the Higher Hinduism is an urgent necessity and an imperative

duty of the Christian Church. In the presence of the forces of the new movement, the Christian Church must also in a literary form offer her enlightening and saving testimony of Christ crucified and risen, whether it be accepted or not. In past times India by her wisdom singularly failed to know God in His wisdom and, therefore, to find the way of salvation. Nor will the new movement be spared the same disappointment. And then it will again please God in a special way "to save by the foolishness of preaching". The following pages are written with a view to prepare the way for this end.

Perhaps this treatise will also be of some service to the Christian countries of the West. We have already mentioned that well meaning voices from the West recommend Vedāntism as a panacea for the evils of our time, and place it on a level with Christianity, if not above it. And there seems to be an ever growing number of those who, without any deeper knowledge, attracted by shallow common-places and mistaking Hinduism for its cast-off foster-brother Buddhism, throw covetous glances towards the "sublime philosophy of India" and "the repose of Nirvāṇa". We Christians would fain believe that with many, if not with all of them, the cause for this is not conscious hostility to Christian truth, but rather ignorance of it and also an ill-informed and exaggerated estimate of the merits of the Vedānta philosophy, which appears to them in a strange, captivating form, and is at all events more consoling than rank materialism. But we know, on the other hand, that this is a delusion which must lead to disappointment and despair. It is those deluded seekers after truth whom we would like to turn from the error of their ways to the ever fresh spring of the Gospel, which alone can soothe their pain and heal their suffering souls. The best way to achieve this end will perhaps be a comparative presentation of the leading features of Hinduism and Christianity.

Finally, those Christians who live joyfully in their faith; untroubled by the doubts which float in the air, may find it

useful, by comparing one of the most important non-Christian religions with Christianity, to gain a new insight into the blessings they enjoy through their faith in the Gospel of Christ crucified and risen. If in this way they become more conscious of their precious possession, they will feel so much the more induced to assist in the work of bringing this wealth, without detriment to its present owners, to non-Christian nations. At the same time, the study of the leading features of philosophic Hinduism will give the friends of missions an insight into the mighty bulwarks opposed to mission work in India. They will thus be enabled better to understand the arduous work of the missionaries, and the difficulties and struggles incidental to the conversion of a Hindu brought up in those thoughts and ideas, and to follow with deeper sympathy the development of missionary labour in India.

In other respects also our time is favourable for attempting a literary comparison of the chief aspects of Christian truth with the leading features of Higher Hinduism. Thanks to the extensive and thorough-going researches of Western scholars, the sources of philosophic Hinduism have become generally accessible. A number of distinguished scholars have made us so far acquainted with the religion of the Vedic Āryans, with the mystico-theosophical meditations of the Upanishads, with the philosophy of the Vedānta and kindred systems, that it is no longer difficult to study the leading features of philosophic Hinduism and place the corresponding fundamental truths of Christianity over against them.

Of course, it is absolutely impossible for a single man with onerous professional duties to draw directly from the sources and study in the original all the voluminous sacred books of Hinduism. That is the province of specialists. Our task must be to avail ourselves of the results of those special researches and, with their help, to draw a picture, as genuine and complete as possible, of the fundamental tenets of Higher Hinduism. For the most part, the leaders of the Neo-Hinduistic movement do not know the Sanskrit sources themselves, but

only the results of the researches made into these sources by European and, more recently, by Indian scholars. Making use, on our part, of such works, we shall, however, scrupulously avoid making any statement with regard to philosophic Hinduism that cannot be borne out by its documents. As far as possible, we shall try to found our whole exposition on authentic quotations from the sacred books of Hinduism, translating them as accurately as possible. In doing so we, as Christians, are conscious of the fact that we have no occasion whatever to force anything on the sources that may be foreign to them, to withhold from the reader anything that is to be found in them, or to make philosophic Hinduism worse than it appears in its own sacred books.

The most important authority of philosophic Hinduism is the "Veda". This word, derived from the root *vid* = to know, means the only knowledge which the ancient Āryans possessed, their sacred lore, the hymns composed for the praise of the Gods, and the ceremonial necessary for the sacrifices. This sacred lore was at first transmitted by oral tradition only, but later it was reduced to writing and arranged in several collections. Therefore the word Veda now denotes those depositories of the sacred lore of Āryan antiquity. There are several such Vedas. Each Veda contains a collection (*saṃhitā*) of hymns (*mantra*). A *mantra* is a thing thought out, a poem, or hymn; it is also named *sūkta*, *i.e.*, well spoken, properly said, a hymn.

Each collection of hymns has attached to it a Brāhmaṇa, *i.e.*, a collection of rules for the performance of sacrifices, and speculations on their origin and effect. To these Brāhmaṇas are joined the so-called *āranyakas*, *i.e.*, forest meditations, mystical speculations to be taught and studied in the solitude of the forests. Certain parts of these Āraṇyakas, in so far as they contain speculations on the Godhead, the world and its origin, the soul and its destination, are called *upanishads*. According to the most probable derivation, this word, from the root *sad* = to sit, with the prefixes *upa* = near, and *ni* = down, means the



sitting down of the pupils at the feet of the teacher, in order to learn from his mouth the secret mystic doctrines of the absolute Soul, and the origin, the nature, and the destiny of the individual Soul, *i. e.*, man. Upanishad, therefore, means simply secret doctrine, and denotes the writings which contain such doctrine. For our purpose we are chiefly concerned with the first and the third part of the Vedas, *i. e.*, the collections of hymns and the Upanishads, while the second part is of minor importance for our purpose. The Upanishads, however, contain the fundamental, although often undeveloped, ideas which are the source of all the later systems of Hindu philosophy.

There are four Vedas, the Ṛig, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharvaveda, each of which contains a Saṃhitā, a Brāhmaṇa, and one or more Upanishads. Of the four Vedas the Ṛigveda is by far the most important. Its Saṃhitā contains 1017, or together with an appendix 1028, hymns in 10 *maṇḍalas* or books, each hymn being made up of a number of verses. Apart from this collection, only that of the Atharvaveda is of independent importance; the sacrificial sentences of the Yajurveda and the hymns of the Sāmaveda, which are taken from the Ṛigveda Saṃhitā, are of minor importance for our purpose. The Atharvaveda, however, contains a good deal of original matter, some of which comes within the scope of our exposition. The Upanishads are of the highest importance for our object. Their connection with the two other parts of the respective Vedas is, however, very loose, sometimes even accidental or arbitrary; and for the study of these works it is of little or no consequence to know to which Veda the respective Upanishad belongs. Most of them have been published as independent works, and may be used as such. Although these writings do not contain a worked-out and logically-arranged system of philosophy, they form the chief source of philosophic Hinduism, on which all the orthodox systems, especially that of the Vedānta, are based, this latter system deriving its name partly from the fact that these

writings, which are its basis, form the concluding parts of the Veda.

These three classes of Vedic writings are known as *śruti*, *i.e.*, what has been heard, or revelation. All the other documents of philosophic Hinduism belong to the class of *smṛiti*, *i.e.*, recollection, tradition. The former are considered as writings of divine, the latter of human, origin. In the second class the six orthodox systems or schools of philosophy, or rather the writings in which these systems are set forth, are the most important. They are arranged in pairs, so that always the first is considered as the basis of the second, and the second the supplement of the first: 1) Nyāya-Vaiśeshika; 2) Sāṅkhya-Yoga; 3) Mīmāṃsā-Vedānta. The two last systems are also distinguished as Pūrva and Uttara-Mīmāṃsa, *i.e.*, the earlier and later discussion of Vedic texts. It is assumed that all the six systems have this in common, that they acknowledge the Veda as their highest doctrinal authority. This may be called the theoretical principle of philosophic Hinduism. Further, these six systems are generally supposed to have this also in common, that they look upon liberation or emancipation (*moksha*) as the *summum bonum*. We may call this the practical principle of philosophic Hinduism.

For our purposes the Vedānta system, also called Uttara-Mīmāṃsa, is the most important, because it claims to be the only genuine exponent of the contents of the Upanishads. Its author is supposed to be Bādarāyaṇa, also known as Vyāsa. He is the author of the Brahma Sūtras, *i.e.*, aphorisms on the Brahman. The work is also named Śāririka Sūtras, *i.e.*, aphorisms on the Absolute Spirit living as an individual soul in the body. These aphorisms are so condensed that without a detailed commentary the meaning is obscure. Many of them consist of one single word, the elucidation of which may occupy several pages of a commentary. We owe the most important commentary on the Sūtras to the celebrated Śāṅkara who has also annotated several Upanishads. Some independent works are also ascribed to Śāṅkara, as for instance Ātmabodha,

*i.e.*, Knowledge of the Self, a short poetical exposition of the Vedānta doctrine. In virtue of these writings Śankara may, side by side with Bādarāyaṇa, be considered as the chief representative of the Vedānta. Great authority attaches also to Vedānta-sāra, a small essay in prose, ascribed to Sadānanda, which gives the substance of the Vedānta in a condensed form. It is not possible to fix definitely the time in which Bādarāyaṇa flourished. Śankara is believed to have lived about the year 800 A.D. It is, however, quite sufficient for our purpose to remember the chronological order: Bādarāyaṇa, Śankara, Sadānanda.

Apart from the Vedānta the Sāṅkhya-Yoga is of the highest importance for our purpose. This is probably the oldest pair of the six orthodox systems. Long ago different scholars had observed that ideas contained in the two systems, and even their names, occur already in some of the Upanishads. As the Upanishads, with the exception of a few clearly modern productions of this name, were generally considered to be of an earlier date than the philosophical schools, it was assumed, with regard to the Sāṅkhya, that those allusions contained in the Upanishads had reference only to some quite undeveloped elements of the system. Of late, however, Professor Garbe<sup>1</sup> has shown that a completely developed Sāṅkhya with its peculiar ideas enters into the above-mentioned Upanishads. It will, therefore, be more correct to distinguish an earlier and a later group of these mystical writings, and to date the original Sāṅkhya doctrine before the later group.

Within the Sāṅkhya school itself we must distinguish an earlier and a later phase of development. Dahlmann<sup>2</sup> thinks that the chief documents of the earlier Sāṅkhya are to be found in the great epic poem, Mahābhārata, and in its celebrated episode, the Bhagavadgītā. Sāṅkhya Kārikā, consisting of 72 verses on the Sāṅkhya doctrine, and the Sāṅkhya Sūtras, also called Sāṅkhya Pravachana, *i.e.*, aphorisms and exposition

---

<sup>1</sup> *Sāṅkhya und Yoga*, p. 2; *Die Sāṅkhya Philosophie*, p. 8 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Mahābhārata, Epos und Rechtsbuch*, p. 231 ff.

of the Sāṅkhya, are considered by Dahlmann to belong to the later development of the system. This assumption is, as Professor Garbe admits, correct in so far as the Sāṅkhya passages in the Mahābhārata are of an earlier date than Sāṅkhya Kārikā and especially Sāṅkhya Pravachana. Professor Garbe, however, is evidently right in finding in the Mahābhārata and particularly in the Bhagavadgītā such marked deviations from the genuine, original Sāṅkhya doctrine, that those passages must be decidedly regarded as secondary documents of the Sāṅkhya system. On the other hand, the well-known conservatism and fidelity of Indian tradition renders it possible that, as Professor Garbe assumes on good grounds, the Kārikā, which is probably more than 500 years later, contains a more original form of the Sāṅkhya doctrine. We consider, therefore, the Kārikā, which is ascribed to Īśvarakṛishṇa and which, according to Professor Garbe, may have been written about the beginning of our era, to be the principal source of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, while the Mahābhārata and Bhagavadgītā are to be regarded as secondary sources. The latter deserves particular consideration, because the Neo-Vedānta movement has, with truly Indian instinct, chosen this didactic poem as its guide. Its doctrine, it must be observed, although based on the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy, contains a more or less personal conception of the Godhead, and lays particular stress on the moral work of man, as a means of salvation, an idea which, of course, is much more in harmony with modern civilised life than the pantheism of the Vedānta, which is not favourable to an active life in this bustling busy world of ours.

The Sāṅkhya Sūtra, a work which according to Professor Garbe<sup>1</sup> was not written till about 1400 A.D., belongs decidedly to the later development of the Sāṅkhya school. It is ascribed to Kapila, who is generally considered to be the founder of the Sāṅkhya school. The former assumption is doubtless unhistorical. It is a matter of dispute whether

Kapila is an historical person or a mythical fiction. Professor Garbe believes he was a real person, and he also thinks that the tradition which takes Kapila to be the founder of the Sāṅkhya school is deserving of credit. For our purpose the whole question is of little importance.

The Yoga system is closely related to, and partly based upon, the Sāṅkhya. The most important documents for this system are the Yoga Sūtras, the authorship of which is ascribed to Patañjali, who is otherwise known as a grammarian who wrote his books in the second century B. C. Supposing this tradition to be historically correct, Professor Garbe thinks that this work may contain the most ancient records of all the orthodox systems of philosophy. The philosophical substance of the Yoga rests entirely on the doctrine of the Sāṅkhya, but with this difference, that the Yoga sages have grafted the idea of a personal deity on the atheistic Sāṅkhya. This was a highly significant concession to popular religion, which cannot exist without a personal God. The peculiarity of the Yoga school consists in the celebrated Yoga asceticism, the performance of which is supposed to lead to emancipation. Just as the cosmology of the Sāṅkhya has become part and parcel of the general philosophy of the Hindus and its later literature, so has also the asceticism of the Yoga.

The Nyāya system, according to tradition, has Gautama for its author. It is usually considered as a system of logic. It might also be called a system of dialectics and a theory of knowledge. It professes to show the means and ways leading to *apavarga*, i. e., conclusion or liberation of the Soul. The Vaiśeṣika system, which is ascribed to Kaṇāda, is a kind of supplement to the former, consisting of physics with a peculiar theory of atoms. However little we may be able to draw from this pair of systems for our purpose, yet it is to them that philosophic Hinduism owes its logic and its theory of knowledge.

As the fundamental ideas of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga have passed into the Mahābhārata, so has the other great epic poem, the

Rāmāyaṇa, been impregnated with Vedānta doctrines, and that to such a degree, that European scholars assume a Vedāntist re-casting of the original poem, and Indian Vedāntists claim the Rāmāyaṇa as a document supporting their doctrine. We must, however, refrain from naming and characterising all the documents of philosophic Hinduism. We can only make use of the principal ones. Nor is the critical sifting of the sources necessary for our purpose, quite irrespective of the fact that, at least for the present, it is beyond the reach of possibility.

We claim the Bible, the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, to be the only source for the exposition of the fundamental truths of Christianity. We do not, and in the nature of things cannot, expect either educated Hindus, or our readers in general, to accept the Bible as a divinely inspired volume. We cannot even hope that they will acknowledge it as the record of God's revelation. We must and may content ourselves with using the Bible as the only and generally acknowledged record of the Christian religion. We, therefore, use the Bible for the Christian part of our comparative study in the same way as we use the documents of Hinduism for the Hindu part of it.

But in this respect we Christians are at a disadvantage. For the clash of arms in the contests of the so-called higher criticism has also reached the ears of educated Hindus. We are afraid they will not be able to resist the inclination of objecting to this or that point in our exposition, on the ground of its being contested by the advocates of the higher criticism. But strictly speaking the problems of the higher criticism do not seriously interfere with our present study. The sole and only point at issue is the value and the truth of the Christian faith in God, His will, and His works, as it is contained in the Bible. When and by whom all this was written is of minor importance for the present purpose. As to the rest, we must claim from educated Hindus the same consideration for our Sacred Book which we concede to the Sacred Books of their religion. We may claim this with all the more justice

as the most extreme contentions of the higher criticism, of the New Testament at least, have been shown to be untenable by unprejudiced critics themselves, and as the substantial authenticity of the New Testament writings has been acknowledged even by such critical scholars as Professor Harnack and others. And with regard to the Old Testament, the tide of criticism has reached its high water-mark and is beginning to recede. At any rate, we may credit educated Hindus with the reflection that in such critical questions it is, as a rule, not the most extreme views which ultimately triumph, but the more moderate course, as was, for instance, recently set forth by Professor James Robertson<sup>1</sup>, with the approval of Professor Dillmann, in opposition to the more radical school of Professor Wellhausen. We have now gained sufficiently secure ground for the questions which we are to discuss, as even our Hindu readers may and, in justice, must acknowledge.

If we now try to formulate our subject more definitely and to arrange the matter under discussion, we must remember what we have said we may call the practical principle of philosophic Hinduism. The central idea of this philosophy, the one which is common to all schools and systems, which all of them have in view as their ultimate aim, and to which all the theosophical and philosophical thought of India is but a means of attaining, is the liberation of the soul, or Salvation (*mukti*, *moksha*). The emancipation of the soul is the *summum bonum* of philosophic Hinduism. In this idea we have not only something in common with the teaching of Christianity, but also a point of contact which, although only formally coinciding, is exceedingly useful and very well suited to become the centre around which our comparative study may turn. The highest good of Christianity is, in addition to other terms, called Salvation in the Bible. It is also called redemption, the Greek equivalent of which also means liberation. If we make use of this formal agreement for our comparison, the material

<sup>1</sup> *The Ancient Religion of Israel.*

difference will appear all the more clearly and conclusively. We, therefore, make *Salvation*, which is the *summum bonum* of both religions, the central point of our study. But in philosophic Hinduism, as in Christianity, salvation has its basis in the conception of God; its presupposition in the conception of the world, of which man forms only a part; and its necessity in the fact of evil and sin. Further, in the idea of salvation we must distinguish its nature and the means of obtaining it. In all these respects the peculiar character of the two religions appears in full distinctness and clearness. These points comprise the leading features of Higher Hinduism and of Christianity, which are to be studied and compared. So then we have to consider salvation according to Hinduism and Christianity, explaining its theological basis in the conception of God, its cosmological presupposition in the conception of the world, its anthropological necessity in the conception of sin and evil, its nature as the *summum bonum*, and the way of obtaining it. Under these heads we propose first to study the leading features of Hinduism and then the corresponding features of Christianity, and finally to compare the results with one another.





PART I.

**THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF SALVATION.**



## I. THE CONCEPTION OF THE GODHEAD IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

### 1. THE VEDIC GODS.

The idea of the godhead in all religions is essential and fundamental. In philosophic Hinduism the conception of salvation rests on this idea, and the conception of the world is also dependent upon it. But the sacred books recognised by philosophic Hinduism are far from presenting a uniform, homogeneous idea of the godhead. In accordance with its theoretical principle philosophic Hinduism relies for its conception of the godhead, in the first instance, on the Veda. In this connection this means the Upanishads, *i.e.*, the theosophical parts of the different Vedas. Philosophic Hinduism is, however, by no means inclined, for that reason, to abandon the conception of the godhead as found in the collections of hymns. It rather tries to read into the hymns its own conception of the godhead, or to interpret them according to that conception, or in some other way to incorporate into its own system the statements concerning the godhead contained in the hymns. We must, therefore, first of all examine what conception of the godhead is to be found in the Vedic hymns, especially in those of the R̥gveda.

#### DYĀUSHPITAR.

In the hymns of the R̥gveda the gods are called *devās*, *i.e.*, the radiant or shining ones. It seems obvious that this name was suggested to the ancient Āryans by the radiant

splendour of the sky. If this be the case, *devās* may, as Oldenberg thinks, simply mean "the heavenly ones". This supposition becomes a certainty through the fact that in the hymns the sky is designated by the word *Dyaus*, which is derived from the same root as *deva* (*div* = to beam, to shine), and that the sky is worshipped as a god. Some scholars are of opinion that Dyaus was one of the most ancient and, at the same time, the highest of the gods. Dyaus, it must be remembered, is the same word which occurs as Zeus in Greek and as Jupiter in Latin—the names of the chief gods of the Greeks and Romans—and as Tyr-Ziu, by which name the ancient Teutons called their principal war-god. From this we may infer that, before the Indo-Germans were split into different nations, they worshipped a god called the "Shining One", "Heaven", perhaps also "Heaven-Father". For, as the Greeks spoke of Father Zeus, and as the word *pater* (= father) is contained in the name Jupiter, so in the hymns of the R̥gveda the sky or heaven is often named Dyaushpitar, *i.e.*, Heaven-Father:

O Heaven our Father, Earth our guileless Mother,  
 O Brother Agni, and ye Vasus, bless us.  
 Grant us, O Aditi and ye Ādityas,  
 all of one mind, your manifold protection.

*R̥gveda VI, 51, 5.*

This name of Heaven-Father has been associated with "Our Father which art in Heaven" (Matt. vi, 9), and probably Dewan Bahadur Raghunātha Rao had this in mind when asserting that the fatherhood of God was taught in the Veda. Everybody, however, must see that there is a vast difference between the personification of the visible heaven or sky, to which the poetical appellative of father is given, and the Father in Heaven, *i.e.*, in the invisible world, as revealed by Jesus Christ.

In the R̥gveda we find, together with Heaven-Father, also Mother Earth (*Prithivī* = the broad one). Sometimes their names are connected in the dual number, for they are considered as husband and wife, and are called the progenitors

or parents of all earthly creatures, who owe their existence to them. Thus in the following hymn addressed to this pair :

- 1 I praise with sacrifices mighty Heaven and Earth  
at festivals, the wise, the strengtheners of law,  
Who, having gods for progeny, conjoined with gods,  
through wonder-working wisdom bring forth choicest boons.
- 2 With invocations, on the gracious Father's mind,  
and on the Mother's great inherent power I muse.  
Prolific Parents, they have made the world of life,  
and for their brood all round wide immortality.
- 3 These sons of yours, well skilled in work, of wondrous power,  
brought forth to life the two great Mothers first of all.  
To keep the truth of all that stands and all that moves,  
ye guard the station of your son, who knows no guile.
- 4 They, with surpassing skill, most wise, have measured out  
the twins united in their birth and in their home.  
They, the refulgent sages, weave within the sky,  
yea, in the depths of sea, a web for ever new.
- 5 This is to-day the goodliest gift of Savitar:  
this thought we have, when now the God is furth'ring us.  
On us with loving-kindness Heaven and Earth bestow  
riches and various wealth and treasures hundredfold.

*Rig. I, 159.*

Besides predicates of a more physical character, the above hymn ascribes to this pair of gods also intellectual and even moral qualities; they are called "wise", "gracious", "strengtheners of law". Their "brood" (v. 2) probably means men; in v. 1 they are themselves designated as "having gods for their progeny", whereas it is said afterwards that their sons, "well-skilled in work, of wondrous power" or "the artists and the wise" — which certainly means the gods — have formed, *i. e.*, created, their own great parents or mothers. The poet does not explain how we are to understand this. Vedic poetry often indulges in paradoxes not easily understood by us. But Western poets, too, are fond of describing the marriage of heaven and earth, an idea which is at the bottom of this hymn and other passages. In Aitareya Brāhmaṇa iv, 27, it is discussed in plain prosaic words: "These two worlds were once joined. (Subsequently) they separated.

(After their separation) there fell no rain, nor was there sunshine. The five classes of beings (gods, men, etc.) did not keep peace with one another. (Thereupon) the gods brought about a reconciliation of both these worlds. Both contracted with one another a marriage according to the rites observed by the gods. . . . . That world approached this world; thence were produced heaven and earth (*dyāvāprithivī*)."<sup>1</sup>

May not the passage in the above hymn, about the sons having formed their great parents or mothers, contain an allusion to the myth here related of the reconciliation of heaven and earth brought about by the gods? At any rate Dyaus and Prithivī are here brought into close relation with the preservation of all that was created, which moreover is distinctly stated in different passages of the hymns, *e. g.*:

Widely-capacious pair, mighty, that never fail,  
the Father and the Mother keep all creatures safe,  
The two world-halves, the spirited, the beautiful,  
because the father hath clothed them in goodly form.

*Rig. I, 160, 2.*

In spite of the above statement that the gods, their sons, have formed their parents, another poet is puzzled about their origin:

Whether of these is elder, whether later?  
how were they born? who knoweth it, ye sages?  
These of themselves support all things existing:  
as on a car the Day and Night roll onward.

*Rig. I, 185, 1.*

In all these passages it is still quite clear that the idea of these "great parents" has sprung entirely from the aspect of the visible sky, which, at the horizon round about, seems to touch the widely expanded earth.

#### ADITI.

According to some scholars the goddess Aditi should be considered as a personage related to Dyaus and of similar

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V. p. 23.

origin. We have met her before in the company of Dyaus and other gods. According to Max Müller, Aditi means "boundless space", *i. e.*, infinity. Then the idea of this goddess would have arisen, similar to that of Father Dyaus, from the sight of the visible sky. In *Rig. x, 63, 2. 3* Aditi seems to coincide with the boundless space of heaven:

- 2 For worthy of obeisance, Gods, are all your names,  
     worthy of adoration and of sacrifice.  
 Ye who were born from waters, and from Aditi,  
     and from the earth, do ye here listen to my call.
- 3 I will rejoice in these Ādityas for my weal,  
     for whom the Mother pours forth water rich in balm,  
 And Dyaus, the Infinite, firm as a rock, sweet milk,—  
     gods active, strong through lauds, whose might the Bull upholds.

According to these verses the gods were born from Aditi, the waters, and the earth. This corresponds to a classification of the gods occurring also in other passages, *viz.*, those of the highest heaven, those of the sky which contains the waters, *i. e.*, the clouds, and those of the earth. Therefore, the assumption suggests itself that here Aditi stands for the highest heaven, *i. e.*, what we call the space of the universe or the ether. Also in the second of these two verses Aditi appears in close connection with the sky. The translation of the second part of the first half of v. 2 is doubtful. It might also be rendered: "Mother Aditi reaching up to heaven." In other passages Aditi is also identified with heaven and earth, and then again appears to be separate from them. Dr. Muir therefore believes Aditi to be a personification of what we call nature. In proof of which he quotes the following:

Aditi is the heaven, Aditi mid-air,  
 Aditi is the Mother, and Sire, and Son:  
 Aditi is all Gods, Aditi five-classed men,  
 Aditi all that hath been born and shall be born.

*Rig. I, 89, 10.*

The commentator observes on this passage that Aditi is here extolled as the soul of the whole world (*sakala jagad-ātmanā*), which according to Indian terminology would be the



idea of nature. It is, however, questionable whether this identification is to be taken seriously and whether such far-reaching conclusions may be drawn from it. Perhaps it is only one of those hyperboles, by means of which the Vedic poets wished to gain the favour of the gods.

According to the late Professor R. Roth, Aditi means the infinity of time, *i.e.*, eternity. This idea, however, does not seem to be prominent in the passages relating to Aditi, and it is doubtful whether we may ascribe to the Vedic poets the conception of eternity as we understand the term. Aditi really means unboundedness, and Oldenberg seems to be right in finding in this name the idea of liberty. It is a fact that the prayers addressed to Aditi—hymns entirely addressed to her do not occur—contain frequent allusions to liberty and liberation from sin and guilt. This becomes evident from the following verse, to which it would not be difficult to add many similar passages:

May this Steed bring us all-sustaining riches,  
wealth in good kine, good horses, manly offspring.  
Freedom from sin may Aditi vouchsafe us:  
the Steed with our oblations gain us lordship.

*Rig. I, 163, 22.*

For this conception of Aditi Oldenberg quotes a passage where, besides guiltlessness (*anāgastva*), boundlessness or freedom (*adititva*) is a blessing prayed for (*Rig. VII, 51, 1*), and he rightly observes that we cannot fail to hear an allusion to the goddess's name in the latter expression. It agrees with the character of the goddess that in other passages she appears as the deliverer from affliction (*amhas*).

#### THE ĀDITYAS. VARUṆA.

Aditi has a number of sons, the Ādityas. The number of the Ādityas is generally said to be seven, sometimes eight, and later twelve. All their names are nowhere given. Varuṇa appears as the highest of the Ādityas. In the ancient Persian religion this god appears likewise at the head of the Ādityas

under the name of *Ahura*. On the other hand, it has of late been called in question, whether we are justified in taking *Varuṇa* as identical with the Greek *Uranos* = heaven, a doubt which will seem unfounded to those who are not initiated into the mysteries of comparative philology.

*Varuṇa* is extolled in the Vedic hymns as a great and mighty king, as the creator of the world, as the protector and preserver of its laws. As the protector and avenger of the\* moral laws he is among the Vedic gods the one to whom the greatest number of moral qualities is attributed. In one of the most beautiful hymns, the poet celebrates *Varuṇa*'s creative power in the following words:

Wise, verily, are creatures through his greatness  
 who stayed even spacious heaven and earth asunder;  
 Who urged the high and mighty sky to motion,  
 the Star of old, and spread the earth before him.

*Rig. VII, 86, 1.*

The idea of order appears in the following passage, *Rig. VII, 87, 1. 2*:

- 1 *Varuṇa* cut a pathway out-for *Sūrya*,  
 and led the watery floods of rivers onward.  
 The Mares, as in a race, speed on in order,  
 he made great channels for the days to follow.
- 2 The wind, thy breath, hath sounded through the region  
 like a wild beast that seeks his food in pastures.  
 Within these two, exalted Earth and Heaven,  
 O *Varuṇa*, are all the forms thou lovest.

According to this passage *Varuṇa* keeps the mares of the sun in their course, thereby preparing a broad, *i.e.*, an unimpeded, path for the days, so that day by day the light of the sun may be poured down upon the earth. Heaven and earth and what lies between them are the forms *Varuṇa* loves, which we may understand as his lovely dwelling-places, where he rules with unrestricted authority.

*Varuṇa*'s statutes or laws, which are continually alluded to in the hymns, are of special interest. On account of his maintaining them strictly and continually, he is called *Dhri-*

*tavrata*, i.e., he whose laws stand firm. The importance of these laws is clearly seen in the following hymn, which we quote in full, because it reveals Varuṇa's character in almost every respect:

- 1 Whatever law of thine, O God, O Varuṇa, as we are men,  
Day after day we violate,
- 2 Give us not as a prey to death, to be destroyed by thee in wrath,  
To thy fierce anger when displeased.
- 3 To gain thy mercy, Varuṇa, with hymns we bind thy heart, as binds  
The charioteer his tethered horse.
- 4 They flee from me dispirited, bent only on obtaining wealth,  
As to their nests the birds of air.
- 5 When shall we bring, to be appeased, the Hero, Lord of warrior, might,  
Him, the far-seeing Varuṇa?
- 6 This, this with joy they both accept in common: never do they fail  
The ever-faithful worshipper.
- 7 He knows the path of birds that fly through heaven, and, Sovran of the sea,  
He knows the ships that are thereon.
- 8 True to his holy law, he knows the twelve moons with their progeny,  
He knows the moon of later birth.
- 9 He knows the pathway of the wind, the spreading, high, and mighty wind;  
He knows the Gods who dwell above.
- 10 Varuṇa, true to holy law, sits down among his people; he,  
Most wise, sits there to govern all.
- 11 From thence perceiving he beholds all wondrous things both what hath been,  
And what hereafter will be done.
- 12 May that Āditya, very wise, make fair paths for us all our days:  
May he prolong our lives for us.
- 13 Varuṇa, wearing golden mail, hath clad him in a shining robe:  
His spies are seated round about.
- 14 The God whom enemies threaten not, nor those who tyrannise o'er men,  
Nor those whose minds are bent on wrong.
- 15 He who gives glory to mankind, not glory that is incomplete,  
To our own bodies giving it.
- 16 Yearning for the wide-seeing One, my thoughts move onward unto him,  
As kine unto their pastures move.
- 17 Once more together let us speak, because my meat is brought priest-like,  
Thou eatest what is dear to thee.
- 18 Now saw I him whom all may see, I saw his car above the earth:  
He hath accepted these my songs.

- 19 Varuṇa, hear this call of mine: be gracious unto us this day;  
Longing for help I cry to thee.
- 20 Thou, O wise God, art Lord of all, thou art the king of earth and heaven:  
Hear, as thou goest on thy way.
- 21 Release us from the upper bond, untie the bond between, and loose  
The bonds below, that I may live.

*Rig. I, 25.*

As is seen particularly from the beginning and the end of this hymn, the poet is probably visited and fettered by illness, his life being endangered. This he ascribes to the wrath of Varuṇa, whose deadly weapon he sees aimed at his head, because he is conscious of having violated Varuṇa's laws. This wrath of the furious one, of Varuṇa himself, he wishes to propitiate with his hymn. Varuṇa's mind, which by his wrath seems to be bound, like a horse tied to a cart, the poet wants to set free and enable it to bestow fresh blessings and favours. For this purpose the poet sings the praise of Varuṇa, who throughout the hymn appears as a king ruling in wisdom and power, dealing out punishment with strictness, to whom, however, mercy and kindness are not unknown. In v. 6 there is an allusion to another one, his twin-brother, as it were, with whom he lovingly draws near to his worshippers. That other god is doubtless Mitra, whose character we shall consider presently. Those whose minds are bent on wrong (v. 14) are enemies of Varuṇa, evidently other than men. They are doubtless those dark, vicious demons, who so often appear in the hymns and are so much dreaded by the Vedic singers, but cannot do any harm to the mighty ruler Varuṇa. It also appears distinctly from the hymn that Varuṇa's laws are the moral standard for men and regulate the forces of nature. But, of course, to those sages, the material and the moral world was still a homogeneous whole, not divided into the opposites of nature and spirit. On account of the special interest attaching to the laws of Varuṇa, a few more passages about them may be quoted here:

Whither by day depart the constellations  
that shine at night, set high in heaven above us?

Varuṇa's holy laws remain unweakened,  
and through the night the moon moves on in splendour.

*Rig. I, 24, 10.*

O mighty Varuṇa, now and hereafter,  
even as of old, will we speak forth our worship.  
For in thyself, invincible God, thy statutes  
ne'er to be moved are fixed as on a mountain.

*Rig. II, 28, 8.*

Aryaman, Aditi, deserve our worship :  
the laws of Varuṇa remain unbroken.  
The lot of childlessness remove ye from us,  
and let our course be rich in kine and offspring.

*Rig. III, 54, 18.*

In the Varuṇa hymn quoted above, reference was made chiefly to the moral laws, whereas these passages seem to refer rather to the laws of the firmament, where the constellation of the Great Bear and the Moon run their fixed course, and to the laws of nature, by means of which bountiful offspring and plenty of cattle are obtained.

In the Rigveda Varuṇa is frequently mentioned in connection with the waters. We have seen before that he prepares their way for the rivers which flow into the sea. In the following hymn he appears as the king of the waters :

- 1 Forth from the middle of the flood the Waters—  
their chief the Sea — flow cleansing, never sleeping.  
Indra, the Bull, the Thunderer, dug their channels :  
here let those Waters, Goddesses, protect me.
- 2 Waters which come from heaven, or those that wander  
dug from the earth, or flowing free by nature,  
Bright, purifying, speeding to the Ocean,  
here let those Waters, Goddesses, protect me.
- 3 Those amid whom goes Varuṇa the Sovran,  
he who discriminates men's truth and falsehood—  
Distilling meat, the bright, the purifying,  
here let those Waters, Goddesses, protect me.
- 4 They from whom Varuṇa, the King, and Soma  
and all the Deities drink strength and vigour,  
They in whom Vaiśvānara Agni entered,  
here let those Waters, Goddesses, protect me.

*Rig. VII, 49.*

The waters, in whose midst Varuṇa here rules as king, are explicitly said to be akin to the sea as a family of which the

sea is the most distinguished member. He is, therefore, also called *sindhupati*, lord of the rivers or the sea, and *apām adhipati*, ruler of the water<sup>1</sup>. Thus Varuṇa has descended from his heavenly heights and finally become the god of the sea, which is certainly a later addition to his original character.

### MITRA.

Side by side with Varuṇa there appears frequently another Āditya called Mitra, whose origin also reaches back to the time before the Āryans came to India, for we find his name, in the form of Mithra, in the ancient Persian religion. The difference between the two gods, who generally appear as a closely united pair (Mitra-Varuṇau), is, according to the late Professor Roth, the following: "Mitra is the heavenly light, as it appears by day, whereas Varuṇa, although lord of light and time, chiefly rules the nightly heaven." In support of this statement, Roth quotes Rīg. VII, 36, 2, where Vasishṭha, the poet, says: "One of you (Varuṇa) is a strong, unerring leader, and he who is called Mitra (friend) stirreth men to labour." It is quite possible that this may mean that in the morning, when the night draws to a close, Mitra, as the sun or in connection with it, calls men to labour. In fact, in the popular religion of the present time, Mitra is looked upon as a sun-god and his name is a synonym for sun. The following hymn shows distinctly the close relations of the two brothers to the sun, and their moral character:

- 1 When thou, O Sun, this day, arising, sinless,  
shalt speak the truth to Varuṇa and Mitra,  
O Aditi, may all the Deities love us,  
and thou, O Aryaman, while we are singing.
- 2 Looking on man, O Varuṇa and Mitra,  
this Sun ascendeth up by both the pathways,  
Guardian of all things fixt, of all that moveth,  
Beholding good and evil acts of mortals.

<sup>1</sup> Rīg. VII, 64, 2. Atharv. V, 24, 4.

- 3 He from their home hath yoked the Seven gold Coursers  
who, dropping oil and fatness, carry Sūrya.  
Yours, Varuṇa and Mitra, he surveyeth  
the worlds and living creatures like a herdsman.
- 4 Your coursers rich in store of sweets have mounted :  
to the bright ocean Sūrya hath ascended,  
For whom the Ādityas make his pathway ready,  
Aryaman, Varuṇa, Mitra, accordant.
- 5 For these, even Aryaman, Varuṇa, Mitra,  
are the chastisers of all guile and falsehood.  
And these, Aditi's sons, infallible and mighty,  
have waxen in the home of Law Eternal.
- 6 These, Mitra, Varuṇa, whom none deceiveth,  
with great power quicken even the fool to wisdom,  
And wakening, moreover, thoughtful insight,  
lead it by easy paths o'er grief and trouble.
- 7 They, ever vigilant, with eyes that close not,  
caring for heaven and earth, lead on the thoughtless.  
Even in the river's bed there is a shallow :  
across this broad expanse may they conduct us.
- 8 When Aditi and Varuṇa and Mitra,  
like guardians give Sudās their friendly shelter,  
Granting him sons and lineal succession,  
let us not, bold ones, move the Gods to anger.
- 9 May he with offerings purify the altar  
from any stains of Varuṇa's reviler.  
Aryaman save us from all those who hate us :  
give room and freedom to Sudās, ye Mighty.
- 10 Hid from our eyes is their resplendent meeting :  
by their mysterious might they hold dominion.  
Heroes, we cry trembling in fear before you,  
even in the greatness of your power have mercy.
- 11 He who wins favour for his prayer by worship,  
that he may gain him strength and highest riches,  
That good man's mind the Mighty Ones will follow :  
they have brought comfort to his spacious dwelling.
- 12 This priestly task, Gods, Varuṇa and Mitra,  
hath been performed for you at sacrifices.  
Convey us safely over every peril!  
Preserve us evermore, ye Gods, with blessings!

*Rig. VII, 60.*

What is most remarkable in this hymn is that it says of Mitra-Varuṇa, they have grown up "in the home of Law Eternal"; we might also translate "in the house of justice", or "in the

dwelling place of truth". As such they are the "chastisers of all guile and falsehood", "not to be deceived", which is again and again emphasized in the hymns. Therefore, the poet is anxious that Sūrya, the Sun-god, when he rises, may declare to those judges his—the poet's—and his companions' innocence. Further, it is remarkable that Mitra and Varuṇa take care of the foolish man, who violates their laws from ignorance; that they wisely teach him the way of the law and that they in general "awaken thoughtful insight" in man (v. 6). In leading the foolish man in the way of their statutes they, at the same time, provide a ford (shallow) in the dangerous current of the river, *i.e.*, a way out of distress (v. 7). In v. 8 there is an allusion to an historical event, the victory of the Āryan chief Sudās over the hordes of the Dasyus, the aborigines of India, which is here said to be due to Aditi, Mitra, and Varuṇa. Finally, in vv. 9 and 10, the vicious demons appear again, who try to deceive even Varuṇa and to disturb the sacrifice, who secretly plan a hostile attack, and by means of terrible, mysterious sorcery try to do harm to the sacrificers.

In the following hymn Mitra appears in his individual existence as separate from Varuṇa. This hymn is the only one addressed to him alone, but it is perhaps composed of two shorter hymns, or fragments of hymns:

- 1 Mitra, when speaking, stirreth men to labour :  
Mitra sustaineth both the earth and heaven,  
Mitra beholdeth men with eyes that close not.  
To Mitra bring, with holy oil, oblation.
- 2 Foremost be he who brings thee food, O Mitra,  
who strives to keep thy sacred Law, Āditya.  
He whom thou helpest ne'er is slain or conquered,  
on him, from near or far, falls no affliction.
- 3 Joying in sacred food and free from sickness,  
with knees bent lowly on the earth's broad surface,  
Following closely the Āditya's statute,  
may we remain in Mitra's gracious favour.
- 4 Auspicious and adorable, this Mitra  
was born with fair dominions, King, Disposer.  
May we enjoy the grace of him, the Holy,  
yea, rest in his propitious lovingkindness.



- 5 The great Āditya, to be served with worship,  
who stirreth men, is gracious to the singer.  
To Mitra, him most highly to be lauded,  
offer in fire oblation that he loveth.
- 6 The gainful grace of Mitra, God, supporter of the race of man,  
Gives splendour of most glorious fame.
- 7 Mitra, whose glory spreads afar, he who in might surpasses heaven,  
Surpasses earth in his renown.
- 8 All the five races have repaired to Mitra, ever strong to aid,  
For he sustaineth all the Gods.
- 9 Mitra to Gods, to living men, to him who strews the holy grass,  
Gives food fulfilling sacred Law.

*Rig. III, 59.*

In this hymn Mitra, as in other hymns Varuṇa, is celebrated as a great king, ruling kindly and graciously, but at the same time watching over his laws. Some expressions in the hymn might be referred to the rising sun, especially the words, "he stirreth men to labour" (vv. 1 and 5), if we may accept this translation as correct. It is, however, perhaps more correct to translate, "he unites the people". For, according to the Avesta, Mithra is the god of alliances, therefore literally and emphatically the one who unites and allies people. The name Mitra means friend, and as this word is of neuter gender, Oldenberg thinks it must originally have meant friendship, alliance, and that only after having been applied to the god of alliances, it came to mean friend. In accordance with the tone and substance of this hymn, there is in Mitra's relation to the alliances, which are concluded in good faith and loyalty, a striking allusion to the moral character of this god.

Oldenberg takes Varuṇa to be a moon-god, Mitra a sun-god, and the other Ādityas the planets. But he also is of opinion that, on account of their moral character, Varuṇa and Mitra occupy a unique position among the Vedic gods. Moral qualities are, indeed, occasionally ascribed also to other gods, such as Aditi, Heaven and Earth, Agni, and Indra. But no other Vedic god is so prominent and distinguished for his moral character as Mitra and Varuṇa. Oldenberg, therefore, supposes that we have here two gods which are not of genuine

Āryan growth, but were adopted by the ancestors of the Indian and Iranian Āryans from neighbouring tribes. If this were the case, they must have come from more Western countries, and, as among all Western races "the Semites were the earliest to attain to an earnest moral view of life", Oldenberg<sup>1</sup> thinks it likely that the Indo-Iranians received these gods from the Semites, perhaps without fully understanding their real nature. Oldenberg gives no proof of this assumption, and we must maintain that the names of these two gods are genuinely Āryan and have no trace of Semitic origin in them. On account of this fact Oldenberg's hypothesis must at once appear doubtful. And besides, it is hard to believe that the Semites or "Accadians" (Genesis x, 10) alone should have possessed "pure moral sentiments" or "a higher moral consciousness". And from what source did those nations receive this most valuable of all possessions? Modern scholars, indeed, often fail to recognize a sound kernel of historic truth in the biblical narratives of those primeval times. But that does not prove that they do not contain such a kernel. Why should it be incredible that, according to those narratives, all mankind, including also Semites and Āryans, had a common home and that from there they brought with them the elements of religious and moral sentiments and of an earnest, high view of human life?

It seems to us that this assumption is by no means opposed to the facts we find in the Veda and the Avesta. According to Oldenberg the bright forms of the Vedic gods stand in bold relief against the back ground of the belief in innumerable evil spirits, similar to the fetishes of primitive races, and he thinks that, in the development of the Āryan race, fetishism preceded the religion of the Vedas. If this supposition has any foundation in scientifically ascertained facts, it will be a solid support for our assumption that Mitra-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 31 ff.

Varuṇa had their origin in the moral and religious conceptions of the Indo-Iranians themselves. For we must remember that all the fetish-worshipping races see, behind the innumerable evil spirits which inhabit the fetishes, one Supreme God, who has created heaven and earth, and is by no means destitute of moral attributes. If Indra and Agni and many other deities of the Vedas have emerged from the surging tide of fetish-demons, there seems to survive in that interesting dual form of Mitra-Varuṇa the great, good, and righteous Creator, whom even the most degraded fetish-worshippers have not forgotten. There is at least as much probability in this assumption as in the above hypothesis of the famous author of "The Religion of the Vedas". It must, therefore, also remain doubtful, whether Varuṇa was originally a moon-god and not, after all, the personification of the sky with its innumerable stars, which so manifestly seemed to reveal the laws of Varuṇa. In that case the equation Varuṇa = Uranos would also not be beyond the range of probability.

### SŪRYA.

More than once we have met in the company of Mitra-Varuṇa the sun-god Sūrya. He is, at least in the popular religion of our own time, considered as so closely belonging to the Ādityas, that Āditya has become a very common term for the sun, and that in the language of the people the word does not mean anything else. The doings and character of Sūrya appear, to a certain degree, from the hymn last quoted, which is addressed partly to him, partly to Mitra-Varuṇa. With his chariot, drawn by seven bright mares, he drives his upward course through the bright atmosphere, watching the doings of men and bringing to light what is right and wrong in them. We may understand this in accordance with the German proverb, "The sun will bring it to light", or with the Indian proverb, "In course of time, truth will be known". In the hymns addressed to Sūrya it may be observed that, from the phenomenon of the sun as a part of nature, a distinct

personality, conceived after the likeness of man, begins to be distinguished. By way of further illustrating the character of Sūrya we quote the greater part of a hymn addressed to him:—

- 1 His bright rays bear him up aloft, the God who knoweth all that lives,  
Sūrya, that all may look on him.
  - 2 The constellations pass away, like thieves together with their beams,  
Before the all-beholding sun.
  - 3 His herald rays are seen afar, refulgent o'er the world of men,  
Like flames of fire that burn and blaze.
  - 4 Swift and all beautiful art thou, O Sūrya, maker of the light,  
Illumining all the radiant realm.
  - 5 Thou goest to the hosts of Gods, thou comest hither to mankind,  
Hither all light to be beheld.
  - 6 With that same eye of thine wherewith thou lookest, brilliant Varuṇa,  
Upon the busy race of men.
  - 7 Traversing sky and wide mid-air, thou metest with thy beams our days,  
Sun, seeing all things that have birth.
  - 8 Seven Bay Steeds harnessed to thy car bear thee, O thou far-seeing One,  
God, Sūrya, with radiant hair.
  - 9 Sūrya hath yoked the pure bright Seven, the daughters of the car;  
His own dear team, he goeth forth. [with thee,
  - 10 Looking upon the loftier light above the darkness we have come  
To Sūrya, God among the Gods, the light that is most excellent.
- Rig. I, 50, 1—10.*

The hymn shows throughout that it owes its origin to the rising of the sun in his splendour. Before him go the herald rays of the first dawn, which announce the coming of the sun. Having risen, the sun unfolds the banner of his magnificent rays and pours his light over all, so that every thing is revealed, and whosoever has eyes, can see the god with the far-seeing, all-observing eyes and flaming hair. And yet this visible fiery globe is conceived only as the chariot of the god, drawn by seven bay horses, the daughters of the chariot. And into the gloom that overhangs the poet's head—probably meaning some grief or misfortune—there penetrates also a comforting beam of spiritual light from the gloriously beaming Sun-god. Finally, it may be observed that, in later times, Mitra was

entirely united with Sūrya, the sun-god, whereas the latter in the above hymn is once addressed by the name of Varuṇa, or perhaps looked upon as the eye of Varuṇa (vv. 6 and 7).

#### ARYAMAN.

On different occasions Aryaman, another god belonging to the Ādityas, has been mentioned in the hymns already quoted. He is considered to be a sun-god and his name a synonym for the sun. But no special hymns are addressed to him.

#### PŪSHAN.

The popular religion of our times has also identified the God Pūshan with Sūrya. It is, however, a question whether this union was already present in the minds of the Vedic poets so that Pūshan was perhaps only another name for Sūrya. It is true that he appears in close connection with Sūrya, but, on the other hand, he is also distinguished from him. For instance in R̥g. vi, 55, 4. 5 he is called the lover of Sūrya, Sūrya's sister. As occasionally happens with all the Vedic gods, he is called "the giver of treasures", and, of course, he distributes his treasures in the shape of sunshine. The prominent feature in his character is, according to Oldenberg<sup>1</sup>, "that he knows the ways, shows the ways, leads on the ways, protects men from going astray and getting lost, knows how to lead back what has gone astray, and to bring back what has been lost." He also gives the right, straight direction to the furrow in the field, and he follows the cattle with the goad to prevent them from going astray. He is, therefore, called *pathaspati*, Lord of the paths. As such he takes part in the marriage ceremonies, leading the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom and back again:

<sup>1</sup> *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 230.

Let Pūshan take thy hand and hence conduct thee;  
 may the two Āsvins on their car transport thee.  
 Go to the house to be the household's mistress  
 and speak as lady to thy gathered people.

*Rig. X, 85, 26.*

Pūshan is then implored to bestow all kinds of blessings to be found in earthly and heavenly paths. We first quote a hymn which refers to earthly paths:

- 1 Shorten our ways, O Pūshan, move aside obstruction in the path!  
 Go close before us, cloud-born God.
- 2 Drive, Pūshan, from our road the wolf, the wicked, inauspicious wolf,  
 Who lies in wait to injure us.
- 3 Who lurks about the path we take, the robber with a guileful heart—  
 Far from the road chase him away.
- 4 Tread with thy foot and trample out the fire-brand of the wicked one,  
 The double-tongued, whoever he be.
- 5 Wise Pūshan, Wonder-worker, we claim of thee now the aid wherewith  
 Thou furtheredst our sires of old.
- 6 So, Lord of all prosperity, best wielder of the golden sword,  
 Make riches easy to be won.
- 7 Past all pursuers lead us, make pleasant our path and fair to tread:  
 O Pūshan, find thou power for this.
- 8 Lead us to meadows rich in grass: send on our way no early heat:  
 O Pūshan, find thou power for this.
- 9 Be gracious to us, fill us full, give, feed us, and invigorate:  
 O Pūshan, find thou power for this.
- 10 No blame have we for Pūshan, him we magnify with songs of praise:  
 We seek the Mighty One for wealth.

*Rig. I, 42.*

According to the hymns, Pūshan rules also over the last path of men, whom he leads out of this world into the next, as is seen from the following verses which used to be recited at funerals:

- 3 Guard of the world, whose cattle ne'er are injured,  
 may Pūshan bear thee hence, for he hath knowledge.  
 May he consign thee to these Fathers' keeping,  
 and to the gracious Gods let Agni give thee.

- 4 May Āyu, giver of all life, protect thee,  
and bear thee forward on the distant pathway.  
Thither let Savitar, the God, transport thee,  
where dwell the pious who have passed before thee.
- 5 Pūshan knows all these realms: may he conduct us  
by ways that are most free from fear and danger.  
Giver of blessings, glowing, all-heroic,  
may he, the wise and watchful, go before us.
- 6 Pūshan was born to move on distant pathways,  
on the road far from earth and far from heaven.  
To both most wonted places of assembly  
he travels and returns with perfect knowledge.

*Rig. X. 17, 3-6.*

### SAVITAR.

Finally, the god Savitar, the exciter or stimulator, often appears in connection with the sun. Indian tradition and many European scholars consider him to be really identical with Sūrya. Oldenberg<sup>1</sup>, however, says that this means "to misunderstand the structure of this whole range of conceptions". According to this scholar, the conception of Savitar has its origin in the observation of the manifold movements which thrill through the universe. "Who is the exciter of these movements? In answer to this question the god Savitar, the exciter and stimulator, is created, who is, however, found quite developed in the Vedic hymns." There can be no mistake as to the fact that very many passages contain allusions to the name with that meaning, whereas Savitar's relation to the sun is not nearly so evident and clear. However, Oldenberg observes: "As the sun itself accomplishes the most powerful movement in the universe and thereby dominates over every other movement, Savitar, of course, stands in close relation to it, and there is a tendency to ascribe to him attributes of the sun-god." He, therefore, is called Hiranyāksha, the golden-eyed, Hiranyapāṇi, Hiranyahasta, the golden-handed, Hiranyajihva, the golden-tongued; his cuirass, his chariot, are

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 64.

of gold, and he is surrounded by golden splendour. The fact that the sun by means of its light and heat draws forth germinating life from the damp earth, had not escaped the closely observant Vedic poets. We can, therefore, understand how it was that Savitar was identified with the sun and became the sun-god. Hence it is rather doubtful whether Oldenberg is quite right in saying: "The essential feature in the conception of Savitar is not the idea of the sun, neither is it the idea of the sun in a certain aspect, *i.e.*, in so far as it stimulates life and movement; but the essential feature is the abstract idea of this very act of stimulating"<sup>1</sup>. It is a question whether the pre-Vedic Āryans could help connecting the abstract idea of movement with a concrete moving object; and this object would naturally be the sun. The following hymn shows clearly the nature of the god, as implied in his name:

- 1 We crave of Savitar, the God, this treasure much to be enjoyed.  
The best, all-yielding, conquering gift of Bhaga we would gladly win.
- 2 Savitar's own supremacy, most glorious and beloved of all,  
No one diminishes in aught.
- 3 For Savitar, who is Bhaga, shall send riches to his worshipper.  
That wondrous portion we implore.
- 4 Send us this day, God Savitar, prosperity with progeny.  
Drive thou the evil dream away.
- 5 Savitar, God, send far away all sorrows and calamities,  
And send us only what is good.
- 6 Sinless in sight of Aditi through the God Savitar's influence,  
May we obtain all lovely things.
- 7 We with our hymns this day elect the general God, Lord of the good,  
Savitar, whose decrees are true.
- 8 He who for ever vigilant precedes these Twain, the Day and Night,  
Is Savitar, the thoughtful God.
- 9 He who gives glory unto all these living creatures with the song,  
And brings them forth, is Savitar.

*Rig. V, 82.*

All the terms in this hymn, which are translated by "to send", "to drive away", "to bring forth", are so many allusions

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 64.



to the derivation and the meaning of the name Savitar. All these meanings as well as those of exciting, stimulating, etc., are suggested by the name, so that allusion can be made now to one and now to another. It is in connection with this nature of the god that from time immemorial to our own days the so-called Sāvitrī, also called Gāyatri, has been chanted:

Tat savitur vareṇyam | bhargo devasya dhīmahi |  
dhiyo yo nah prachodayāt ||

*Rig. III, 62, 10.*

As it is capable of a twofold interpretation, we give here two translations:

May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the God :

So may he stimulate our prayers.

or,

Let us meditate on the glorious splendour of Savitar the God :

So may he stimulate our thoughts.

In the second rendering we might, in the second line, read “prayers” for “thoughts”. But in whatever way we may explain the meaning, the Sāvitrī does not contain any peculiar mysteries. It is a simple prayer, either for the stimulating of the thoughts, *i.e.*, probably for the worshipper’s plans and intentions, that the carrying them out may meet with success; or for the stimulating of his prayers, that they may have effect with the gods. In either case it is Savitar, the stimulator, of whom this stimulation is asked. The term “excellent splendour” seems to be an allusion to the physical glory of the sun.

### USHAS.

Ushas, the goddess of the dawn, stands in a really organic relation with the sun-god. On the other hand, she is closely connected with the feats of Indra and Brihaspati, whose acquaintance we shall make later on. Ushas is the lovely daughter of heaven, the brightly beaming sister of night, a maiden with her face modestly veiled. As a new dawn arises every day in the eastern sky, it is quite possible to

speak of a plurality of divine dawns. The hymns dedicated to her are among the finest specimens of Vedic poetry: "Pervaded by the poetry of early dawn and free from references to the subtilties of sacrificial ceremonial, these poems have a charm not to be found in the sacrificial hymns proper."<sup>1</sup> According to these songs, Ushas, a lovely maiden in the first bloom of youth, drives in her chariot drawn by ruddy horses; and as a young man follows the maiden of his choice, so she is followed by her lover, the sun-god. As the beloved of the sun-god she appears in the following hymn:

- 1 She hath shown brightly like a youthful woman,  
stirring to motion every living creature.  
Agni hath come to feed on mortal's fuel,  
she hath made light and chased away the darkness.
- 2 Turned to this All, far-spreading, she hath risen  
and shone in brightness with white robes about her.  
She hath beamed forth lovely with golden colours,  
Mother of kine, Guide of the day she bringeth.
- 3 Bearing the God's own eye, auspicious Lady,  
leading her courser white and fair to look on,  
Distinguished by her beams, Dawn shines apparent,  
come forth to all the world with wondrous treasure.
- 4 Draw nigh with wealth and dawn away the foe-man:  
prepare for us wide pasture free from danger;  
Drive away those who hate us, bring us riches:  
pour bounty, opulent Lady, on the singer.
- 5 Send thy most excellent beams to shine and light us,  
giving us lengthened days, O Dawn, O Goddess,  
Granting us food, thou who hast all things precious,  
and bounty rich in chariots, kine, and horses.
- 6 O Ushas, nobly born, Daughter of Heaven,  
whom the Vasishṭhas with their hymns make mighty,  
Bestow thou on us vast and glorious riches.  
Preserve us evermore, ye Gods, with blessings!

*Rig. VII, 77.*

### THE AŚVINS.

Among the deities which form the retinue of the sun-god we must also mention the twin-gods called Aśvins, that is,

<sup>1</sup> Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 287 ff.

horse-owners, riders, or knights. They are generally considered to be the same twins whom the Greeks called Castor and Pollux, the Dioscuri (Acts xxviii, 11). Oldenberg thinks that they originally represented the morning and the evening star. If this is correct, one of them must, according to the original idea, have preceded the sun, and the other must have followed it, and only later could they have become a pair. "In the Veda, however, they appear as two beaming youths, who in the morning, at dawn, drive together along their heavenly path and bring all kinds of help to men in affliction."<sup>1</sup> So they at an early period developed into ideal persons, entirely separate from the natural phenomena which they originally represented.

Oldenberg says that on the day of the Soma festival, in the early morning, before the birds began their song, the twin-gods were worshipped with hymns together with Agni and Ushas. With regard to the part allotted to them in the phenomena of the morning sky, Oldenberg says: "Their action is encompassed by Agni, who lightens the darkness, and by the dawn on the one hand, and on the other by the rising sun."<sup>2</sup> They drive in a bright, golden chariot, drawn by swift horses or birds, with greater speed than that of thought. In the course of their journey they drive round the earth and the sun. If the Ásvins had originally been the morning and the evening star, it would not be easy to explain how they came to be a pair. We find, however, in the passages quoted by Oldenberg some indications that they were originally separate. "They were born here and there" (Rig. i, 184, 4), "born separately" (v, 73, 4). An old fragment of a hymn says: "One is called the child of Night, the other thy son, O Dawn." In accordance with this we read in many places that the twins are worshipped in the morning and in the evening.<sup>3</sup> They marry Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun, who is considered by

---

Oldenberg, *ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 211 ff.

Oldenberg to be the sun himself, by others the dawn, or the "Cloud-Nymph".

The Vedic poets are particularly fond of the *Ásvins*, whom they regard as the benefactors of mankind. They are especially celebrated as skilful physicians, who with their wholesome draughts have accomplished many wonderful cures. The following hymn is remarkable for a special reason: it is ascribed to a poetess, to whom her faith in the benefactors of mankind was a comfort in her solitude (vv. 3 and 6):

- 1 As 't were the name of father, easy to invoke,  
we all assembled here invoke this car of yours,  
*Ásvins*, your swiftly rolling, circumambient car,  
which he who worships must invoke at eve and dawn.
- 2 Awake all pleasant strains and let the hymns flow forth:  
raise up abundant fulness: this is our desire.  
*Ásvins*, bestow on us a glorious heritage,  
and give our princes treasure fair as *Soma* is.
- 3 Ye are the bliss of her who groweth old at home,  
and helpers of the slow although he linger last.  
Men call ye too, *Nāsatyas*, healers of the blind,  
the thin and feeble, and the man with broken bones.
- 4 Ye made *Chyavana*, weak and worn with length of days,  
young again like a car, that he had power to move.  
Ye lifted up the son of *Tugra* from the floods.  
At our libations must all these your acts be praised.
- 5 We will declare among the folk your ancient deeds  
heroic; yea, ye were physicians bringing health.  
You, you who must be lauded, will we bring for aid,  
so that this foe of ours, O *Ásvins*, may believe.
- 6 Listen to me, O *Ásvins*; I have cried to you.  
Give me your aid as sire and mother aid their son.  
Poor, without kin or friend or ties of blood am I.  
Save me, before it be too late, from this my course.  
\* \* \* \*
- 8 Ye gave again the vigour of his youthful life  
to the sage *Kali*, when old age was coming nigh.  
Ye rescued *Vandana* and raised him from the pit,  
and in a moment gave *Viśpala* power to move.
- 9 Ye, *Ásvins* *Twain*, endowed with manly strength, brought forth  
*Rebha*, when hidden in the cave and well-nigh dead,  
Freed *Saptavadhri*, and for *Atri* caused the pit  
heated with fire to be a pleasant resting-place.

- 10 On Pedu ye bestowed, Ásvins, a courser white,  
mighty with nine-and-ninety varied gifts of strength,  
A horse to be renowned, who bore his friend at speed,  
joy-giving, Bhaga-like, to be invoked of men.
- 11 From no side, ye Two Kings, whom none may check or stay,  
doth grief, distress, or danger come upon the man  
Whom, Ásvins swift to hear, borne on our glowing path,  
ye with your Consort make the foremost in the race.
- 12 Come on that Chariot which the Ribhus wrought for you,  
the Chariot, Ásvins, that is speedier than thought,  
At harnessing whereof Heaven's Daughter springs to birth,  
and from Vivasvān come auspicious Night and Day.
- 13 Come, Conquerors of the sundered mountain, to our home,  
Ásvins, who made the cow stream milk for Sayu's sake,  
Ye who delivered even from the wolf's deep throat  
and set again at liberty the swallowed quail.
- 14 We have prepared this laud for you, O Ásvin ,  
and like the Brighus, as a car have framed it,  
Have decked it as a maid to meet the bridegroom,  
and brought it as a son, our stay for ever. *Rig. X, 39.*

## AGNI.

The two most important gods in the Vedic pantheon, to whom the largest number of hymns are addressed, are Agni and Indra. Agni, as his name implies, is the god of fire. His manlike personality is in him separated, less than in the case of the other gods, from the natural phenomenon with which he is connected. As the fire on the household hearth is never extinguished, as the sacrificial fires of the Vedic time continually flame, in the same way Agni has from time immemorial been the friend of man, always honouring him with his company, and the priest who, ever soaring up and down between heaven and earth, carries the offerings of men to the gods, and takes the gods down to the sacrifices offered by men.

The number of hymns addressed to Agni is very large. We first quote one which takes its starting point from the very phenomenon of fire, blazing both on the sacrificial altar and on the household hearth:

- 1 Now praise, as one who strives for strength, the harnessing of Agni's car,  
The liberal, the most splendid One;
- 2 Who, guiding worshippers aright, withers, untouched by age, the foe :  
When worshipped fair to look upon;
- 3 Who, for his glory is extolled at eve and morning in our homes,  
Whose statute is inviolate;
- 4 Who shines refulgent like the Sun, with brilliance and with fiery flame,  
Decked with imperishable sheen;
- 5 Him Atri, Agni, have our songs strengthened according to his sway :  
All glories hath he made his own.

*Rig. II, 8, 1—5.*

Many passages extol Agni as the familiar friend and companion of men, two of which may be quoted here:

Whoso with good steeds and fine gold, O Agni,  
comes nigh thee on a car laden with treasure,  
His friend art thou, yea, thou art his Protector,  
whose joy it is to entertain thee duly.

*Rig. IV, 4, 10.*

At dawn let Agni, much beloved guest of the house, be glorified;  
Immortal who delights in all oblations brought by mortal men.

*Rig. V, 18, 1.*

Oldenberg believes that this feature in Agni's character, viz., his being the familiar companion of men, represents a popular conception, preceding in time the other conception, according to which Agni at the sacrifices plays the important part of priest and conveyer of men's gifts to the gods. This may be quite true. But, on the other hand, we can understand why in the Vedic hymns, which were composed to be sung or recited during the sacrifice, the priestly character of Agni is prominent. Indeed, sacrifices could never be performed without Agni. What then was more natural than that the Brāhman priests found in him their own ideal, in the same way as Indra is the ideal of the Āryan warrior? Even in the earliest portions of the R̥gveda we find hymns which celebrate him as a priest. The very first hymn of the R̥gveda is addressed to him in that character:

- 1 I laud Agni, the chosen Priest, God, minister of sacrifice,  
The Hotar, lavishest of wealth.
- 2 Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as by ancient seers:  
He shall bring hitherward the Gods.
- 3 Through Agni man obtaineth wealth, yea, plenty, waxing day by day,  
Most rich in heroes, glorious.
- 4 Agni, the perfect sacrifice which thou encompassst about  
Verily goeth to the Gods.
- 5 May Agni, sapient-minded Priest, truthful, most gloriously great,  
The God, come hither with the Gods.
- 6 Whatever blessing, Agni, thou wilt grant unto thy worshipper,  
That, Angiras, is indeed thy truth.
- 7 To thee, dispeller of the night, O Agni, day by day with prayer  
Bringing thee reverence, we come;
- 8 Ruler of sacrifices, guard of Law eternal, radiant One,  
Increasing in thine own abode.
- 9 Be to us easy of approach, even as a father to his son:  
Agni, be with us for our weal.

*Rig. I, 1.*

In this hymn Agni appears quite distinctly as the conveyer of the sacrifices to the gods; it is clearly his presence alone which makes the sacrifice successful and pleasing to the gods. He is, therefore, also called Angiras, which term, according to some scholars, is akin to the Greek word for messenger, "angel" (*angelos*). At the close of the hymn, his help is compared to the conduct of a father to his son, which is, indeed, in accordance with the familiar relations of the god to his worshippers, but is nevertheless not sufficient to support the assertion that the Veda teaches the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men.

The Vedic texts contain some interesting hints with regard to Agni's origin; we cannot, however, enter into a full discussion of the matter here. The following passage recalls the Greek myth of Prometheus:

As 't were some goodly treasure Mātariśvan  
brought, as a gift, the glorious Priest to Bhṛigu,  
Banner of sacrifice, the good Protector,  
child of two births, the swiftly moving envoy.

*Rig. I, 60, 1.*

As a banner, *i.e.*, as a symbol of the festival, Agni blazes up on the altar before our eyes; the column of flame and smoke seems to be the shining conveyer of the sacrifice to the gods. He is esteemed a goodly treasure, for it is through him that men obtain the favour and the gifts of the gods. Mātariśvan, the Indian Prometheus, brought him from heaven as a gift to the Bhrigus, an ancient race of priests. Agni is here called “child of two births”, because he has a double origin, as appears from the following passage:

May we adore thee in thy loftiest birth-place,  
and with our praises, in thy lower station.  
The place whence thou hast issued forth I worship:  
to thee well kindled have they paid oblations.

*Rig. II, 9, 3.*

The highest origin or birth of Agni, which is alluded to here, is his heavenly origin. It was from heaven that Mātariśvan took him, and in heaven he appears still as the flash of lightning, perhaps also as the sun. His lower place is the earth, where he is constantly brought forth anew from the sticks out of which he is kindled by attrition. Sometimes even three different births are ascribed to him:

First Agni sprang to life from out of Heaven:  
the second time from us came Jātavedas.  
Thirdly the Manly-souled was in the waters,  
The pious lauds and kindles him, the Eternal.

*Rig. X, 45, 1.*

In the expression “Agni sprang from out of heaven” there is probably an allusion to the Mātariśvan-myth. The second birth took place “from” or “among us”, which certainly means on earth. Finally, Agni has also an existence in water. This may suggest the lightning in the clouds, or we may remember that the trees, out of which Agni finally bursts, take their nourishment from the water, so that in this way Agni is born from that element. This latter thought is suggested by the passage, *Rig. III, 22, 2*:

That light of thine in heaven and earth, O Agni,  
in plants, O Holy One, and in the waters,



Wherewith thou hast spread wide the air's mid-region--  
bright is that splendour, wavy, man-beholding.

The heavenly appearance of Agni is probably in the first place the sun, as is said in numerous passages of the Ṛigveda, for instance in the following verse:

Observant Agni hath appeared, oblation-bearer with his car.  
Agni with his resplendent flame hath shone on high as shines the Sun,  
hath shone like Sūrya in the heavens.

*Rig. VIII, 56, 5.*<sup>1</sup>

His first and second births are sometimes supposed to mean the lightning, which bursts out of the clouds, the waters above the earth. Also his particular name, *Apām Naptar* = Son of the Waters, is supposed to allude to that phenomenon.

### INDRA.

Besides Agni, Indra appears as a very favourite and highly celebrated god in the Ṛigveda. He is the Indian Hercules, also the Indian Thor, the god of thunder, a warlike hero. His worship reaches far back into pre-Vedic, Indo-Iranian antiquity. It is true that his name Indra does not occur in the Avesta, but his honorific title, *Vritrahan* = Vritra-killer, is found there in the form of *Verethraghna*, which distinctly points to the Vedic form and to the myth embodied in it. For two things in particular are in the hymns ascribed to the divine hero Indra: the victory over the malicious demon Vritra and the obtaining of the cows by Indra's victory over Pani. His victory over Vritra is his most prominent feat, in connection with which the waters imprisoned by the demon are set free. In the following hymn Indra appears in the character of the vanquisher of the dragon Vritra:

- 1 I will declare the manly deeds of Indra,  
the first that he achieved, the Thunder-wielder.  
He slew the Dragon, then disclosed the waters,  
and cleft the channels of the mountain torrents.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thus in Max Müller's *Sanskrit Text*, or *Valakhilya VIII, 5*, in Griffith's translation.

- 2 He slew the Dragon lying on the mountain :  
his heavenly bolt of thunder Tvashtar fashioned.  
Like lowing kine in rapid flow descending  
the waters glided downward to the ocean.
- 3 Impetuous as a bull, he chose the Soma,  
and in three sacred beakers drank the juices.  
Maghavan grasped the thunder for his weapon,  
and smote to death this first-born of the dragons.
- 4 When, Indra, thou hadst slain the dragons' first-born,  
and overcome the charms of the enchanters,  
Then giving life to Sun and Dawn and Heaven,  
thou foundest not one foe to stand against thee.
- 5 Indra with his own great and deadly thunder  
smote into pieces Vritra, worst of Vritras.  
As trunks of trees, what time the axe hath felled them,  
low on the earth so lies the prostrate Dragon.
- 6 He, like a mad, weak warrior, challenged Indra,  
the great, impetuous, many-slaying Hero.  
He, brooking not the clashing of the weapons,  
crushed—Indra's foe—the shattered forts in falling.
- 7 Footless and handless still he challenged Indra,  
who smote him with his bolt between the shoulders.  
Emasculate yet claiming manly vigour,  
thus Vritra lay with scattered limbs dissevered.
- 8 There as he lies like a bank-bursting river,  
the waters, taking courage, flow above him.  
The Dragon lies beneath the feet of torrents,  
which Vritra with his greatness had encompassed.
- 9 Then humbled was the strength of Vritra's mother :  
Indra hath cast his deadly bolt against her.  
The mother was above, the son was under,  
and like a cow beside her calf lay Dānu.
- 10 Rolled in the midst of never-ceasing currents,  
flowing without a rest for ever onward,  
The waters bear off Vritra's nameless body :  
the foe of Indra sank to during darkness.
- 11 Guarded by Ahi stood the thralls of Dāsas,  
the waters stayed like kine held by the robber.  
But he, when he had smitten Vritra, opened  
the cave, wherein the floods had been imprisoned.
- 12 A horse's tail wast thou when he, O Indra,  
smote on thy bolt; thou, God without a second,  
Thou hast won back the kine, hast won the Soma ;  
thou hast let loose to flow the Seven Rivers.

- 13 Nothing availed him lightning, nothing thunder,  
hailstorm or mist, which he had spread about him :  
When Indra and the Dragon strove in battle,  
Maghavan gained the victory for ever.
- 14 Whom sawest thou to avenge the Dragon, Indra,  
that fear possessed thy heart when thou hadst slain him ;  
That, like a hawk affrighted through the regions,  
thou crossedst nine-and-ninety flowing rivers ?
- 15 Indra is King of all that moves and moves not,  
of creature tame and horned, the Thunder-wielder.  
Over all living men he rules as Sovran,  
containing all as spokes within the felly.

*Rig. I, 32.*

We have here, according to Professor Roth, a typical Indra-hymn. The Vṛitra-victory, which it celebrates, is, however, extolled in numerous other passages. Vṛitra, the demon, who keeps the waters imprisoned in his hiding-place, a castle in the mountains, is looked upon as a dragon or a serpent (*ahi*), as the first-born, *i.e.*, the foremost of dragons. He is also called *Vṛitratama*, *i.e.*, the worst obstructor. By smashing the head of this dragon with his thunder-bolt, Indra sets the waters free, so that they can straightway flow into the sea. It is strange that in the same act of the drama the sun, the sky, and the dawn are born. In other passages, too, this idea is found in the same connection :

Thou hast unclosed the prisons of the waters ;  
thou hast in the mountain seized the treasure rich in gifts.  
When thou hadst slain with might the dragon Vṛitra,  
thou, Indra, didst raise the Sun in heaven for all to see.

*Rig. I, 51, 4 ; comp. Rig. I, 52, 8.*

This and similar passages relating to the victory over Vṛitra seem to contain a description of the thunder-storms which year by year usher in the much longed-for rainy season. The mountains, in which Vṛitra keeps the waters locked up, would then be the clouds, the waters would be the rains, and the birth of the sky and the sun would imply the re-appearance of the clear sky and the sun after the thunder-storm. Oldenberg finds no distinct allusion to thunder and rain in the

above Indra-hymn, and he thinks that the myth contained in the hymn refers in the first place to the bringing of the streams or their springs out of the mountains. He too, however, admits that the results of comparative mythology leave no doubt with regard to the fact "that the myth was in its original form a thunder-myth, ... that the springs, near which the serpent lay, were clouds, and that according to its original nature the *vajra* = thunder-bolt was a lightning weapon".<sup>1</sup> The Vedic poets may, in hymns like the present, indeed have alluded to the rivers rushing forth from the mountains. But it cannot be denied that they looked upon Indra as the rain-giving thunder-god, which becomes evident from passages like the following:

To him, as in wild joy he fought with him who stayed the rain,  
 his helpers sped like swift streams down a slope,  
 When Indra, thunder-armed, made bold by Soma's draughts,  
 broke Vela's fences down as Trita burst his way.  
 Splendour encompassed thee, forth shone thy warrior might:  
 the rain-obstructor lay in mid-air's lowest deep,  
 What time, O Indra, thou didst cast thy thunder down  
 upon the jaws of Vṛitra hard to be restrained.

*Rig. I, 52, 5. 6.*

Thou from thy lofty plains above, O Indra, hurledst Vṛitra down.  
 Thou drawest forth the kine of guileful Mṛigaya and Arbuda from the  
 mountain's hold.  
 Bright were the flaming fires, the Sun gave forth his shine, and Soma,  
 Indra's juice, shone clear.  
 Indra, thou blewest the great dragon from the air: men must regard  
 that valorous deed.

*Rig. VIII, 3, 19. 20.*

These two passages refer to Indra's fight with Vṛitra in mid-air: "in mid-air's lowest deep" lies the vanquished dragon. This and the allusion to thunder here and to "hailstorm and mist" in the preceding hymn are much more naturally accounted for, if the poet is supposed to allude to the thunder-storm.

The other great exploit of Indra is the acquisition of cows by his victory over the Panis. Oldenberg thinks that originally it was not Indra who accomplished the feat, but a mythological

<sup>1</sup> *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 141.

figure called *Ṛita Āptya*. In later hymns of the *Rigveda*, it must be observed, we find the story of *Ṛita Āptya*, who, stimulated by *Indra*, fights with the three-headed, serpent-bodied monster *Viśvarūpa* (taking all forms), the son of *Tvashtar*. He cuts off the three heads of the monster and sets the cows free (*Rig.* x, 8, 8. 9). In the same way in the *Avesta*, *Thraetaona* of the race of the *Āthvyas*, the same mythological personage as *Ṛita*, in order to deliver two beautiful women, kills a serpent with three heads, three mouths, and six eyes. *Hercules*, in classical mythology, also kills a three-headed monster and drives away the herds of cattle which it had kept concealed.<sup>1</sup>

In the Vedic hymns the myth has been modified according to sacerdotal ideas. The hymns seem to refer simply to the overcoming of human misers (*Paṇis*) by *Indra*, who forces them to give up the desirable cows to him. Complaints with regard to those misers are very numerous in the hymns. In the following passages *Indra's* wrath falls upon the misers; he deals them a fatal blow; whereas the pious man, who with the poet's help worships the god, is promised all kinds of good things:

- 5 He seeks no enterprise with five or ten to aid,  
nor stays with him who pours no juice though prospering well.  
The shaker conquers or slays in this way or that,  
and to the pious gives a stable full of kine.
- 6 Exceeding strong in war he stays the chariot wheel,  
and hating him who pours not, prospers him who pours.  
*Indra*, the terrible, tamer of every man,  
as *Ārya* leads away the *Dāsa* at his will.
- 7 He gathers up for plunder all the niggard's gear:  
excellent wealth he gives to him who offers gifts.  
Not even in wide stronghold may all the folk stand firm,  
who have provoked to anger his surpassing might.

*Rig. V, 34, 5—7.*

Oldenberg thinks that the original form of the myth, which at first certainly referred to cows, not to two beautiful women,

is to be interpreted as the obtaining of the dawn out of the rock of the night-sky. In the hymns the Angiras, a pre-historic family of priests, and Brahmanaspati, the lord of prayer, take part in the action:

O Dawn, who standest on the mountain ridges,  
 Angirases, now praise thy stalls of cattle.  
 With prayer and holy hymn they burst them open :  
 the heroes' calling on the Gods was fruitful.

*Rig. VI, 65, 5.*

In other passages also the dawn appears in connection with cows. Oldenberg's interpretation may probably be right, but it is of little importance for our purpose.

Finally, Indra is the god of battles. To the warriors, who set out to conquer the country, he gives victory over the aboriginal tribes, the Dāsas or Dasyus:

- 10 Bristle thou up, O Maghavan, our weapons :  
 excite the spirits of my warring heroes.  
 Urge on the strong steeds' might, O Vṛitra-slayer,  
 and let the din of conquering cars go upward.
- 11 May Indra aid us when our flags are gathered :  
 victorious be the arrows of our army.  
 May our brave men of war prevail in battle.  
 Ye Gods, protect us in the shout of onset.

*Rig. X, 103, 10. 11.*

In the following passage the enemies are distinctly mentioned, and at the same time Indra's interference stands out in bold relief:

- 4 Thou slewest with thy bow the wealthy Dasyu,  
 alone, yet going with thy helpers, Indra !  
 Far from the floor of heaven, in all directions,  
 the ancient riteless ones fled to destruction.
- 5 Fighting with pious worshippers, the riteless  
 turned and fled, Indra ! with averted faces,  
 When thou, fierce Lord of the Bay Steeds, the Stayer,  
 blewest from earth and heaven and sky the godless.

*Rig. I, 33, 4. 5.*

The Dasyus are here designated as men that do not sacrifice, as riteless and godless, *i.e.*, as people that neither

possess nor observe the sacrificial rites and ordinances with which the Āryans worshipped their gods. These enemies turned and fled with averted faces. And the victory is due to the hero-god, who with his "strong ones" (probably the Maruts or storm-gods) came to assist his pious Āryan worshippers, and himself took part in the action with a mighty blow of his club.

But Indra's help is also implored against Āryan antagonists, when it may happen that both hostile armies invoke him for victory. Then Indra decides against those "grievous sinners" who have done wrong:

- 8 To whom two armies cry in close encounter,  
both enemies, the stronger and the weaker;  
Whom two invoke upon one chariot mounted,  
each for himself, He, O ye men, is Indra.
- 9 Without whose help our people never conquer;  
whom, battling, they invoke to give them succour;  
He of whom all this world is but the copy,  
who shakes things moveless, He, O men, is Indra.
- 10 He who hath smitten ere they knew their danger,  
with his hurled weapon many grievous sinners;  
Who pardons not his boldness who provokes him,  
who slays the Dasyu, He, O men, is Indra.

*Rig. II, 12, 8—10.*

In order to enable Indra to accomplish his exploits, his worshippers must strengthen him with offerings, especially with the invigorating draught of the Soma juice. This favourite beverage of the Vedic Āryans, and of Indra himself, was already known in the Indo-Iranian period. In the Avesta it is called Haoma, and the nectar of the Greeks and Romans is doubtless the same thing. The Vedic Āryans prepared the "bright drop", a yellowish glittering and, at the same time, highly intoxicating drink, from a plant found on the heights of the Himālayas. The Āryans made a separate deity of this stimulating drink, as of everything which they valued or that filled them with enthusiasm. The Soma was also made use of at their sacrifices. What they themselves enjoyed so much, what

seemed to fill them with fiery strength, that the Vedic people thought they must not withhold from the gods. As clarified butter is poured out to Agni, so the Soma juice is presented to Indra and inspires him to perform his feats. We cannot refrain from giving here the highly characteristic and humorous hymn, in which Indra, rather tipsy from his "refreshing draught", indulges in a boasting soliloquy:

- 1 This, even this was my resolve, to win a cow, to win a steed :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 2 Like violent gusts of wind the draughts that I have drunk have lifted me :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 3 The draughts I drunk have borne me up, as fleet-foot horses draw a car :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 4 The hymn hath reached me, like a cow who lows to meet her darling calf :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 5 As a wright bends a chariot-seat, so round my heart I bend the hymn :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 6 Not as a mote within the eye count the Five Tribes of men with me :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 7 The heavens and earth themselves have not grown equal to one half of me :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 8 I in my grandeur have surpassed the heavens and all this spacious earth :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 9 Aha! this spacious earth will I deposit either here or there :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 10 In one short moment will I smite the earth in fury here or there :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 11 One of my flanks is in the sky; I let the other trail below :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 12 I, greatest of the Mighty Ones, am lifted to the firmament :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?
- 13 I seek the worshipper's abode; oblation-bearer to the Gods :  
Have I not drunk of Soma juice?

*Rig. X. 119.*

It cannot be doubted that in the later hymns of the Rîg-veda the worship of Varuṇa compared with that of Agni and Indra recedes more and more into the background. It is also an incontestable fact that in the Varuṇa hymns the moral element is much more prominent than in the hymns addressed to Indra



and Agni. Indra himself is no model of virtue. He is given to strong drink and sometimes bent upon very questionable adventures. On these facts Professor Roth founds his assumption that the worship of Varuṇa represents an earlier phase of the Āryan religion, and that later, along with the decay of the purer morality of Vedic times, Indra took the place of the austere ruler Varuṇa.

This assumption is very plausible indeed. But it is not necessary to suppose that this change in the religious life of the ancient Āryans should have been the result of a long rivalry between the two gods. It can hardly be shown from the hymns that such a rivalry ever existed. The change in the position of the two gods may be easily accounted for without such an assumption. The Āryans had left their former homes with the morally pure worship of Mitra-Varuṇa, in order to conquer new homesteads on the banks of the Indus and the other rivers of the Panjab. But in their wars with the aborigines, which extended over many years, Indra, the warlike hero, the god of battles, came, in the natural course of things, into the foreground and was made serviceable to the national cause. Such wars of conquest must also, especially on the part of the conquerors, have been accompanied by moral degeneration, which, in its turn, must have had a deteriorating effect upon their conception of the godhead.

According to Professor Benfey's views it was rather Father Heaven, Dyauspitar, who was thrust into the background by Indra's glory. Indra's name, it is to be observed, may be interpreted to mean "he who makes it drop or rain", and thus it recalls the name of "Jupiter pluvius" and of "Zeus the rain-giver". If real historical facts are at the bottom of these linguistic phenomena, the conclusion would be unavoidable that a special thunder-god was severed from Dyauspitar and developed into a separate deity called Indra. This assumption does not necessarily contradict Prof. Roth's hypothesis, especially if we remember that Indra is the god of thunder-storms and of battles. Indra, the thunder-god, may

well be the successor of Dyauspitar, and Indra, the war-god, the successor of Varuṇa. This would, moreover, be an instance of how the idea of the godhead was split up, so that new gods made their appearance, while the gods of higher antiquity had more and more to withdraw into the background.

### BRAHMAṆASPATI - BṚHASPATI.

A comparatively modern deity, whose origin we may trace to some extent, appears often in close connection with Indra. This is Brahmanāspati or Bṛhaspati, the Lord of devotion or prayer. Brahman, derived from the root *bṛih*, which in the second name appears as a noun, in the Vedic hymns means "exaltation", that is, chiefly the exaltation of the mind, or devotion, prayer. We see from the hymns what a high value was set upon prayer and what marvellous effect was ascribed to it. The gods also were supposed to pray, and the people extolled the great things achieved by the gods through prayer. This is particularly the case with Agni:

Thou didst perform thy first great deed of hero might  
 what time thou showedst power, through prayer, before this folk.  
 Hurl'd down by thee the car-borne Lord of Tawny Steeds,  
 the congregated swift ones fled in sundry ways.

*Rig. II, 17, 3.*

The god addressed here is Agni. Through his prayer he increased Indra's strength and so enabled him victoriously to accomplish his well known exploit, the fight with Vṛitra. We read similar things of Brahmanāspati himself:

That was a great deed for the godliest of the Gods:  
 strong things were loosened and the firmly fixed gave way.  
 He drove the kine forth and cleft Vala through by prayer,  
 dispelled the darkness and displayed the light of heaven.

*Rig. II, 24, 3.*

In like manner the Ṛishis ascribe to their own prayer the mystical power to influence the gods with regard to their will and their capability, which they express in their favourite similes:

Those who are yoked by prayer with prayer I harness,  
 fleet friendly Bays who take their joy together.  
 Mounting thy firm and easy car, O Indra,  
 wise and all-knowing come thou to the Soma.

*Rig. III, 35, 4.*

To Indra's car the Bay Steeds have I harnessed,  
 that new well-spoken words may bring him hither.  
 Here let no other worshippers detain thee,  
 for among us are many holy singers.

*Rig. II, 18, 3.*

We shall have to acknowledge that in these passages the diction of the Rishis is metaphorical. But it stands to reason that they employed their figures to express thought. And the thought hidden behind the figures here seems to be that the prayer of the Rishis, by virtue of a mystic power inherent in it, stimulates and strengthens the gods to activity, which, in its turn, works for the good of the worshippers. This idea is at the bottom of all Vedic worship. This conception of the power of prayer developed in that direction, till it condensed into the form of Brahmanaspati, the Lord of prayer. Of course, the whole of this process cannot be traced in the hymns. But sometimes we find more or less distinct allusions to the fact that Brahmanaspati's personality had its origin in the Āryan worship. It is very remarkable that in one of the passages quoted he is called "the godliest of the Gods". Clearly he, the representative and protector of their dearest interests, was particularly near to the hearts of the Brāhman poets. In the following hymn the character and work of the Lord of prayer appears with tolerable distinctness and completeness:

- 1 We call thee, Lord and Leader of the heavenly hosts,  
 the wise among the wise, the famousest of all,  
 The King supreme of prayers, O Brahmanaspati :  
 hear us with help ; sit down in place of sacrifice.
- 2 Brihaspati, God immortal ! verily the Gods  
 have gained from thee, the wise, a share in holy rites.  
 As with great light the Sun brings forth the rays of morn,  
 so thou alone art father of all sacred prayer.

- 3 When thou hast chased away revilers and the gloom,  
thou mountest the refulgent car of sacrifice;  
The awful car, Brihaspati, that quells the foe,  
slays demons, cleaves the stall of kine and finds the light.
- 4 Thou leadest with good guidance and preservest men;  
distress o'ertakes not him who offers gifts to thee.  
Him who hates prayer thou punishest, Brihaspati,  
quelling his wrath: herein is thy great mightiness.
- 5 No sorrow, no distress from any side, no foes,  
no creatures double-tongued have overcome the man,—  
Thou drivest all seductive fiends away from him  
whom, careful guard, thou keepest, Brahmanaspati.
- 6 Thou art our keeper, wise, preparer of our paths:  
we, for thy service, sing to thee with hymns of praise.  
Brihaspati, whoever lays a snare for us,  
him may his evil fate precipitate, destroy.
- 7 Him too, who threatens us without offence of ours,  
the evil-minded, arrogant, rapacious man,—  
Him turn thou from our path away, Brihaspati:  
give us fair access to this banquet of the Gods.
- 8 Thee as protector of our bodies we invoke,  
thee, saviour, as the comforter who loveth us.  
Strike, O Brihaspati, the Gods' revilers down,  
and let not the unrighteous come to highest bliss.
- 9 Through thee, kind prosperer, O Brahmanaspati,  
may we obtain the wealth of men which all desire.  
And all our enemies, who near or far away  
prevail against us, crush, and leave them destitute.
- 10 With thee as our own rich and liberal ally  
may we, Brihaspati, gain highest power of life.  
Let not the guileful, wicked man be lord of us:  
still may we prosper, singing goodly hymns of praise.
- 11 Strong, never yielding, hastening to the battle-cry,  
consumer of the foe, victorious in the strife,  
Thou art sin's true avenger, Brahmanaspati,  
who tamest even the fierce, the wildly passionate.
- 12 Whoso with mind ungodly seeks to do us harm,  
who, deeming him a man of might mid lords, would slay,—  
Let not his deadly blow reach us, Brihaspati;  
may we humiliate the strong ill-doers' wrath.
- 13 The mover mid the spoil, the winner of all wealth,  
to be invoked in flight, and reverently adored,  
Brihaspati hath overthrown like cars of war  
all wicked enemies who fain would injure us.

- 14 Burn up the demons with thy fiercest-flaming brand,  
those who have scorned thee in thy manifested might,  
Show forth that power that shall deserve the hymn of praise :  
destroy the evil-speakers, O Brihaspati.
- 15 Brihaspati, that which the foe deserves not,  
which shines among the folk celestial, splendid,  
That, Son of Law, which is with might refulgent—  
that treasure wonderful bestow thou on us.
- 16 Give us not up to those who, foes in ambushade,  
are greedy for the wealth of him who sits at ease,  
Who cherish in their hearts abandonment of Gods.  
Brihaspati, no further rest shall they obtain.
- 17 For Tvashtar, he who knows each sacred song, brought thee  
to life, pre-eminent o'er all the things that be.  
Guilt-scourger, guilt-avenger is Brihaspati,  
who slays the spoiler and upholds the mighty Law.
- 18 The mountain, for thy glory, cleft itself apart  
when, Angiras! thou openedst the stall of kine.  
Thou, O Brihaspati, with Indra for ally,  
didst hurl down water-floods which gloom had compassed round.
- 19 O Brahmanaspati, be thou controller  
of this our hymn and prosper thou our children.  
All that the Gods regard with love is blessed.  
Loud may we speak, with heroes, in assembly.

*Rig. II, 23.*

Brahmanaspati is here addressed as the Lord of hosts, *i. e.*, of the spirits, by which the Rishis believed themselves and the world of men surrounded. The designation of the god as "the wise among the wise", which perhaps might be rendered as "the poet of all poets", is probably an allusion to his origin, the prayers being products of poetry. We may find the same meaning in v. 17 which says that Tvashtar "who knows each sacred song brought thee to life". Verse 2 is obscure, but the words, "verily the gods have gained from thee, the wise, a share in holy rites", probably allude to the fact that the custom of accompanying the sacrifices with hymns was embodied in him and thus became the share of the gods. As Lord of prayer he is also asked to drive away and keep away the aborigines, who were hostile to Āryan worship, and the malicious, weird, whispering hosts

of spirits, who likewise tried to disturb the sacrifice. Finally, Brahmanaspati's share in the Vṛitra-fight appears in various passages of the hymn (verses 11 and 17).

### RUDRA.

A deity of rather inferior rank in the Vedic pantheon is Rudra. We often meet him and his sons, the Maruts, in the martial train of Indra. Rudra is generally considered to be a wild storm-god. Oldenberg takes exception to this view. "At all events he cannot have had that character in the conceptions of the Vedic poets." In the hymns addressed to Rudra, the author of *Die Religion des Veda* finds no vestige of the descriptions of the storms that are met with in the hymns addressed to the Maruts, "the real storm-gods". "Their invariable contents are quite different, viz., the fear of the missiles shot by the dreadful archer; the prayer, not to let men fall the victims of disease and death, and to grant them his miraculous medicines."<sup>1</sup> The hymns addressed to Rudra are not numerous. The reason, according to Oldenberg, is that "on account of the god's weird character he was not praised in hymns together with the other gods at the time of the Soma-sacrifice", for which most Veda-hymns were composed.

Rudra is a dreadful figure. His origin is horrible. In order to punish Prajāpati, the creator of the world, for an act of incest committed by him, as no other avenger could be found, "the gods put all the dreadful things found within themselves together in one heap, and therefrom arose this god" (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa III, 33).<sup>2</sup> Rudra's appearance also is dreadful. In the Ṛigveda he is often called *Babhru*, the red or brown one. In the later Vedic literature we find the following description: "His belly is bluish black, his back is red. With the bluish black colour he covers his enemy and rival. With the red colour he strikes him who hates him." His weapons are the bow and arrows. He haunts the mountains

*Die Religion des Veda*, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 217.

in company with his spouse Rudrānī and his sons Bhava and Śarva, "who hurry flying through the woods, gasping for prey like two wolves". The Maruts are his host. Like the king of Dahomey he has a female body-guard, "the female noise-makers, anti-noise-makers, assistant noise-makers, the female seekers, hisses, flesh-eaters",<sup>1</sup> indeed a weird company, probably meaning snakes.

Rudra's doings, too, partake of the dreadful. He sends disease to man and beast. He may, however, also give health, if a man knows how to gain his favour. Rudra is further omnipresent in clean and unclean, holy and unholy places, in water and in air. Considering all this, Oldenberg is inclined to think him a wood-god. But if Rudra is not a storm-god, why then are the Maruts, the storm-gods, considered to be his sons? Oldenberg thinks it is on account of the idea "that the winds come from the same mysterious distance, from the solitary places of woods and mountains, and that they come rushing upon men as suddenly as Rudra with his death-bringing missiles".<sup>2</sup> Occasionally Rudra is called Śiva, *i. e.*, auspicious, lucky — clearly a flattering term, born out of the fear of his arrows. This surname is the reason for his identification with the third person of the Trimūrti, the god Śiva of the later popular religion. The following hymn may corroborate what has been said of Rudra's character:

- 1 Father of Maruts, let thy bliss approach us :  
     exclude us not from looking on the sunlight,  
 Gracious to our fleet courser be the Hero :  
     may we transplant us, Rudra, in our children.
- 2 With the most saving medicines which thou givest,  
     Rudra, may I attain a hundred winters.  
 Far from us banish enmity and hatred,  
     and to all quarters maladies and trouble.
- 3 Chief of all born art thou in glory, Rudra,  
     armed with the thunder, mightiest of the mighty.  
 Transport us over trouble to well-being :  
     repel thou from us all assaults of mischief.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 222.

- 4 Let us not anger thee with worship, Rudra,  
ill praise, Strong God, or mingled invocation.  
Do thou with strengthening balms incite our heroes:  
I hear thee famed as best of all physicians.
- 5 May I with praise-songs win that Rudra's favour  
who is adored with gifts and invocations.  
Ne'er may the tawny God, fair-cheeked and 'gracious,  
swift-hearing, yield us to this evil purpose.
- 6 The Strong, begirt by Maruts, hath refreshed me,  
with most invigorating food, imploring.  
As he who finds a shade in fervent sunlight  
may I, uninjured, win the bliss of Rudra.
- 7 Where is that gracious hand of thine, O Rudra,  
the hand that giveth health and bringeth comfort,  
Remover of the woe the Gods have sent us?  
O Strong One, look thou on me with compassion.
- 8 To him the strong, great, tawny, fair-complexioned,  
I utter forth a mighty hymn of praises.  
We serve the brilliant God with adorations,  
we glorify the splendid name of Rudra.
- 9 With firm limbs, multiform, the strong, the tawny  
adorns himself with bright gold decorations:  
The strength of Godhead ne'er departs from Rudra,  
him who is Sovran of this world, the mighty.
- 10 Worthy, thou carriest thy bow and arrows,  
worthy, thy many-hued and honoured necklace.  
Worthy, thou cuttest here each fiend to pieces  
a mightier than thou there is not, Rudra.
- 11 Praise him, the chariot-borne, the young, the famous,  
fierce, slaying like a dread beast of the forest.  
O Rudra, praised, be gracious to the singer:  
let thy hosts spare us and smite down another.
- 12 I bend to thee as thou approachest, Rudra,  
even as a boy before the sire who greets him.  
I praise thee, Bounteous Giver, Lord of heroes:  
give medicines to us as thou art lauded.
- 13 Of your pure medicines, O potent Maruts,  
those that are wholesomest and health-bestowing,  
Those which our father Manu hath selected,  
I crave from Rudra for our gain and welfare.
- 14 May Rudra's missile turn aside and spare us,  
the great wrath of the impetuous One avoid us.  
Turn, Bounteous God, thy strong bow from our princes,  
and be thou gracious to our seed and offspring.



- 15 O tawny Bull, thus showing forth thy nature,  
     as neither to be wroth, O God, nor slay us,  
 Here, Rudra, listen to our invocation.  
     Loud may we speak, with heroes, in assembly.

*Rig. II, 33.*

### THE MARUTS.

Frequent mention is made in this hymn of the Maruts, the mighty storm-gods. They are described in the hymns as a host of beautifully adorned youths, with glittering spears and golden ornaments on their breasts. When they drive along in their chariot drawn by piebald mares or antelopes, storms, lightnings, and torrents of rain accompany their train.<sup>1</sup> They are the sons of Rudra and of the cow *Prīṣni*, who, according to Oldenberg, is a many-coloured thunder-cloud. In describing these wild, boisterous hosts, the poetry of the hymns rises to a wild, lofty beauty, which, of course, cannot be reproduced in the translation. We, however, give a specimen here :

- 1 Now do I glorify their mighty cohort,  
     the company of these, the youthful Maruts.  
 Who ride impetuous on with rapid horses,  
     and radiant in themselves, are Lords of Amṛit.
- 2 The mighty glittering band, arm-bound with bracelets,  
     givers of bliss, unmeasured in their greatness  
 With magical powers, bountiful, ever-roaring,—  
     these, liberal Heroes, venerate thou singer.
- 3 This day may all your water-bringers, Maruts,  
     they who impel the falling rain, approach us.  
 This fire, O Maruts, hath been duly kindled;  
     let it find favour with you, youthful Sages.
- 4 Ye raise up for the folk an active ruler,  
     whom, Holy Ones! a master's hand hath fashioned.  
 Ye send the fighter hand to hand, arm-mighty,  
     and the brave hero, Maruts, with good horses.
- 5 They spring forth more and more, strong in their glories,  
     like days, like spokes where none are last in order.  
 Highest and mightiest are the sons of *Prīṣni*.  
     Firm to their own intention cling the Maruts.

<sup>1</sup> Oldenberg, *ibid.* p. 225.

- 6 When ye have hastened on with spotted coursers,  
     O Maruts, on your cars with strong-wrought fellies,  
 The waters are disturbed, the woods are shattered.  
     Let Dyaus the Red Steer send his thunder downward.
- 7 Even earth hath spread herself wide at their coming,  
     and they as husbands have with power impregn'd her.  
 They to the pole have yoked the winds for coursers:  
     their sweat have they made rain, these Sons of Rudra.
- 8 Ho! Maruts, Heroes, skilled in Law, immortal,  
     be gracious unto us, ye rich in treasures,  
 Ye hearers of the truth, ye sage and truthful,  
     grown mighty, dwelling on the lofty mountains.

*Rig. V, 58.*

### VĀYU AND VĀTA.

Besides these storm-gods we find in the Vedic hymns the two wind-gods Vāyu and Vāta, who are a little softer and more quiet, but of inferior importance. Probably these two names belonged originally to one god. At least, in the popular religion of to-day they mean one and the same deity. Vāta, whose name means also the phenomenon of the wind, is glorified as the breath of the gods, and in philosophising texts is often thus interpreted. Oldenberg thinks it remarkable that in the hymns the wind-god Vāyu is always the companion of the thunder-god Indra, whereas Vāta keeps company with the rain-god Parjanya. This is perhaps due to the fact that the gods Indra and Vāyu are to a certain degree severed from the natural phenomenon they represent, whereas Parjanya and Vāta are still closely connected with the respective phenomena. We might be inclined to regard these two gods as belonging to a later period; but Parjanya existed already in the early Indo-Germanic age, as is proved by the names of the Lithuanian god Perkunas and the northern god Fyörgyn. In the popular religion of the present time Parjanya is considered to be a surname of Indra. The following well-known Parjanya hymn describes in a lively and graphic way the beginning of the rainy season. Even in our days we cannot fail to realise something of the joy over that event, which the hymn breathes:

- 1 Sing with these songs thy welcome to the Mighty,  
with adoration praise and call Parjanya.  
The Bull, loud roaring, swift to send his bounty,  
lays in the plants the seed for germination.
- 2 He smites the trees apart, he slays the demons :  
all life fears him who wields the mighty weapon.  
From him exceeding strong flies e'er the guiltless,  
when thundering Parjanya smites the wicked.
- 3 Like a car-driver whipping on his horses,  
he makes the messengers of rain spring forward.  
Far off resounds the roaring of the lion,  
what time Parjanya fills the sky with rain-clouds.
- 4 Forth burst the winds, down come the lightning-flashes :  
the plants shoot up, the realm of light is streaming  
Food springs abundant for all living creatures,  
what time Parjanya quickens earth with moisture.
- 5 Thou at whose bidding earth bows low before thee,  
at whose command hoofed cattle fly in terror,  
At whose behest the plants assume all colours,  
even thou, Parjanya, yield us great protection.
- 6 Send down for us the rain of heaven, ye Maruts,  
and let the Stallion's flood descend in torrents.  
Come hither with this thunder while thou pourest  
the waters down, our heavenly Lord and Father.
- 7 Thunder and roar : the germ of life deposit.  
Fly round us on thy chariot water-laden.  
Thine opened water-skin draw with thee downward,  
and let the hollows and the heights be level.
- 8 Lift up the mighty vessel, pour down water,  
and let the liberated streams rush forward.  
Saturate both the heaven and earth with fatness,  
and for the cows let there be drink abundant.
- 9 When thou, with thunder and with roar,  
Parjanya, smitest sinners down,  
This universe exults thereat,  
yea, all that is upon the earth.
- 10 Thou hast poured down the rain-flood : now withhold it.  
Thou hast made desert places fit for travel.  
Thou hast made herbs to grow for our enjoyment :  
yea, thou hast won thee praise from living creatures.

## VISHṆU.

The last of the Vedic gods we have yet to consider is Vishṇu. He does not play a prominent part in the Vedic hymns; but the later development of the Indian religion has assigned to him the second place in the Trimūrti, the Indian trinity. He is usually considered to be a sun-god, and his celebrated three steps are interpreted to mean the sun at its rise, at its position in the zenith, and at its setting. But this interpretation forgets that there are not three, but only two steps, leaving three foot-prints. Oldenberg draws attention to the fact that in the Vedic texts these three steps do not mean the orbit of the sun, but that they move across the earth and at last turn to those spheres where the gods and departed saints dwell. Thus, for instance, in the following passage:

- 3 Three times strode forth this god in all his grandeur  
over this earth bright with a hundred splendours.  
Foremost be Vishṇu, stronger than the strongest;  
for glorious is his name who lives for ever.
- 4 Over this earth with mighty step strode Vishṇu,  
ready to give it for a home to Manu.  
In him the humble people trust for safety:  
he, nobly born, hath made them spacious dwellings.

*Rig. VII, 100, 3. 4.*

Here we see Vishṇu striding over the earth in order to procure dwelling places for his faithful worshippers. According to the following passage the third step is directed to a mysterious, unapproachable place, which even the light-winged birds cannot reach:

- 4 We laud this manly power of him the Mighty One,  
preserver, inoffensive, bounteous and benign;  
His who strode, widely pacing, with three steppings forth  
over the realms of earth for freedom and for life.
- 5 A mortal man, when he beholds two steps of him  
who looks upon the light, is restless with amaze.  
But his third step does no one venture to approach,  
no, nor the feathered birds of air who fly with wings.

*Rig. I, 155, 4. 5.*

The last mentioned third step, or rather foot-print, is now the dwelling place of the blessed, where in the society of Vishṇu they incessantly drink bliss from a fountain of imperishable joys. This and the general kindliness of Vishṇu, and his friendly ways with men, appear in the following hymn in beautiful poetry :

- 1 I will declare the mighty deeds of Vishṇu,  
of him who measured out the earthly regions,  
Who propped the highest place of congregation,  
thrice setting down his footsteps, widely striding.
- 2 For this his mighty deed is Vishṇu lauded,  
like some wild beast, dread, prowling, mountain-roaming ;  
He within whose three wide-extended paces  
all living creatures have their habitation.
- 3 Let the hymn lift itself as strength to Vishṇu,  
the Bull far-striding, dwelling on the mountains,  
Him who alone with triple step hath measured  
this common dwelling-place, long, far extended.
- 4 Him whose three paces that are filled with sweetness,  
imperishable, joy as it may list them,  
Who verily alone upholds the threefold,  
the earth, the heaven, and all living creatures.
- 5 May I attain to that his well-loved mansion  
where men devoted to the Gods are happy.  
For there springs, close akin to the Wide-strider,  
the well of meath in Vishṇu's highest footstep.
- 6 Fain would we go unto your dwelling-places,  
where there are many-horned and nimble oxen,  
For mightily, there, shineth down upon us  
the widely-striding Bull's sublimest mansion.

*Rig. I, 154.*

With regard to this and similar passages, Oldenberg is of opinion that the width of space is embodied in Vishṇu. It cannot be denied that the word "wide" is the real key-word in these Vishṇu-passages. Also the highest footprint of Vishṇu, the dwelling-place of the blessed, can be easily connected with this idea, for this dwelling-place is "far above all the stars". Oldenberg thinks that the fact of there being three steps can be explained by the special predilection which mythological imagination has for that number. It is, however, significant

that Indian tradition sees in Vishṇu's three steps, the rise, the zenith, and the setting of the sun. This may perhaps be a later interpretation of the three steps, when their original meaning was no longer known. But this interpretation readily connects itself with the idea of "width of space", for in these three stages the sun passes through a "wide space".

Vishṇu is occasionally not only the husband of Aditi, who is likewise closely connected with "wide space", but also Indra's companion in the fight with Vṛitra. In Rīg. VIII, 89, 12, Indra addresses to him the following words:

Step forth with wider stride, my comrade Vishṇu;  
make room, Dyaus, for the leaping of the lightning.  
Let us slay Vṛitra, let us free the rivers:  
let them flow loosed at the command of Indra.

The idea is probably that Vishṇu with his three steps prepares the wide battle-field for Indra, that he may fight and conquer the hostile demon.

It is not our province to make the whole host of deities, spirits, and personifications, which occur in the hymns, pass in review before our readers. For our purpose it may suffice to have mentioned and discussed the most prominent deities. We have purposely as much as possible quoted the words of the Vedic poets, to enable the reader to form his own opinion of the Vedic conception of the Godhead. Considering the hymns quoted, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the Vedic deities are personally conceived beings, the majority of them being connected with the phenomena of nature. But it is not quite to the point to say, as is sometimes done, that the religion of the Vedic hymns is "Physiolatry", worship of the forces and phenomena of nature. Several gods, such as Soma and Brahmanāspati, have their origin in the sacrificial worship of the Indian Āryans. Agni, too, has as many relations to sacrificial rites as to the phenomenon of fire. Indra is as much the god of battles as the god of thunder. As to Mitra-Varuṇa, it can hardly be stated with certainty which phenomenon

of nature they represent. If the majority of the Vedic gods must be considered as deifications of different natural phenomena, it is to be remembered that the process of deification had come to a conclusion at a period prior to that of the Vedas. And in that period man shaped his gods for himself after the image of man, at the same time distributing his idea of the Godhead among the several phenomena of nature. The attempt to trace, in the Vedic hymns, the growth of religion in general can hardly be said to have been successful. For this attempt Aditi formed the starting-point and the chief example, her name being taken to mean "infinity". But if Oldenberg is right in assuming that Aditi means unboundedness, *i.e.*, liberty, that whole theory falls to the ground. All the other Vedic gods are fully developed, personal, man-like beings.

Moral qualities are especially attributed to Mitra-Varuṇa, and such qualities are occasionally to be seen in most of the Vedic gods. But apart from those two exceptions, physical attributes are most prominent in the character of the Vedic gods, which fact clearly betrays their origin. Those qualities are extolled chiefly with regard to the practical benefits which the worshippers and certainly also the Rishis themselves expected from their gods. This physical trait in the character of the gods is particularly remarkable, because from this the pantheism of the following age took its origin and development.

### MONOTHEISM OR POLYTHEISM ?

Modern Hindus, who are more or less influenced by Christian ideas, are fond of asserting that the conception of the Godhead as found in the Vedic hymns is monotheism, and on this assumption again rests that other assertion that the Vedas teach the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, in short, all that is good in the Bible. We do not deny the fact that the idea, that God can be only one, occasionally occurs in the hymns. Thus we read in Rīg. I, 164, 46 :

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni,  
and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutmān.

To what is One, sages give many a title :  
They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.

This remarkable verse doubtless gives expression to the belief of the poet that the numerous gods of the popular worship do not exist in reality, and that their names are simply so many designations of one and the same being, which is here characteristically conceived of not as a person, but as a thing. It is, however, doubtful whether by this passage, which is perhaps the only one of its kind, we are justified in ascribing to all the Vedic poets and the whole Āryan nation the belief in only one God. And this is the real question at issue. Those who attentively read the hymns quoted above, which have by no means been selected with an intention to show that the religion of the Vedas was polytheism, will certainly not be at a loss for an answer to this question. The above passage, which is rather monistic than monotheistic, is simply the philosophical reflection of a single Ṛishi. In general the conceptions of the Ṛishis are doubtless polytheistic. We do not deny that, with some amount of good will united with the necessary skill, the hymns may be so allegorised and twisted that the tenets of a pantheistic theology may be the outcome. But to every unprejudiced reader it must be self-evident that the Ṛishis consider their gods as so many separate individual beings, who may be addressed as “thou” and “ye”. It never occurs to the Ṛishis that they may be speaking only of abstract qualities or faculties of one single, personal or impersonal, Being. We have seen that there is one monistic verse in the R̥gveda; there may be some more, but not many; but we might quote numerous hymns which are addressed to “all the gods”, and also several passages which speak of a definite number of gods:

With these, borne of one car, Agni, approach us,  
or borne on many, for thy steeds are able.  
Bring, with their Dames, the Gods, the Three-and-Thirty,  
after thy god-like nature, and be joyful.

*Rig. III, 6. 9.*



In the following passage there appears yet a higher number :

Three times a hundred Gods and thrice a thousand,  
and three times ten and nine have worshipped Agni,  
For him spread sacred grass, with oil bedewed him,  
and stablished him as Priest and Sacrificer.

*Rig. III, 9, 9.*

No allegorising, be it ever so bold or subtile, will avail to explain away the plurality of gods in these passages. The number of three thousand three hundred and thirty-nine is too distinctive, and notwithstanding the predominance of the number three, it cannot contain any mystic profundity. The same must also be inferred from the following passage which, for fear of slighting any god, distinguishes great and small, old and young gods :

Glory to Gods, the mighty and the lesser,  
glory to Gods, the younger and the elder.  
Let us, if we have power, pay the Gods worship :  
no better prayer than this, ye Gods, acknowledge.

*Rig. I, 27, 13.*

For the polytheism of the Vedic hymns we have also the testimony of Śankara, which is above suspicion and an authority to modern Hindus :

“Although the words meaning Sun and the like relate to light and similar phenomena, yet they always designate the respective self-conscious deity, endowed with glory and other divine attributes. For such is the usage of the language employed in the Vedic hymns and sacrificial rules. And the gods, by dint of their excellence, have the power to continue as personal spirits of light, etc., or to appear in any shape they may choose. Also to the Earth and to the rest of the elements appertain such superintendents endowed with self-consciousness, for it is said (in the Veda), ‘The Earth spoke’, ‘the Waters spoke’. And though the elements, as for instance the light in the Sun, have no self-consciousness, it must be said according to the usage of the hymns and sacrificial rules,

that they (the elements) have for superintendents personal gods endowed with consciousness." <sup>1</sup>

It is therefore quite in vain to interpret the belief of the Vedic singers as if their hymns contained theistic or monotheistic ideas. Whoever tries to do so can certainly not quote the authority of the great Vedānta schoolman.

### KATHENOTHEISM?

So much the more some people, relying on the authority of Max Müller, believe themselves justified in designating the Vedic conception of the Godhead as henotheism or kathenotheism. According to Max Müller, kathenotheism must be strictly distinguished both from monotheism and from polytheism. From the former, because it is supposed to be the belief in one God only, denying at the same time the possibility of the existence of other gods; from the latter, because it is supposed to be the belief in many gods, which form together, as it were, a strictly graded hierarchy. "In the Veda one god after the other is invoked. During the invocation, everything that can be said of a deity is ascribed to the god that is being invoked. While the poet sees that deity before him, he seems to see no other. And yet other gods are mentioned not only in the same collection of hymns, but even in the same hymn: and they, too, are absolutely independent, absolutely the highest, absolutely divine. The prospect of the poet seems suddenly to change, and the same poet who just now knew nothing but the Sun as the Lord of Heaven and Earth, now sees Heaven and Earth as the father and mother of the Sun, nay as the parents of all the gods." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Śāṅkara's Commentary to *Brahma Sūtra*, 33. Compare Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, p. 69 ff.

<sup>2</sup> M. Müller, *Rise and Growth of Religion*, p. 313 and 333; comp. L. v. Schröder, *Indiens Literatur und Kultur*, p. 73 f.

Apart from the very questionable definition of polytheism, which, of course, by no means implies a strictly graded hierarchy of gods, other scholars agree with the above description of kathenotheism. Thus, for instance, Professor von Schröder says: "It is striking to observe how the imagination of the Vedic poets, ever dwelling on the figure of one god, imagines and paints it with ever higher and grander features, in ever more gigantic dimensions, till at last the other gods retire and fade before this figure of gigantic size. Another day brings the sacrifice and the praise of another god, and the same process is repeated with this one, and again and again with other gods. In fact, in a well arranged pantheon these most different highest gods, creators and rulers of the universe, could not exist together, and so far Max Müller is right in saying that this is no real polytheism."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, after all, it is with this famous kathenotheism as with the children of Luther, who said that the one that was then on his knees was dearest of all to him. In other words, the kathenotheism of the Vedic hymns is polytheism without superiority or inferiority being attributed to the several gods, each of whom may be invoked as the highest, greatest, and most powerful. Not much definite meaning is, therefore, hidden in the ambitious name. Oldenberg deals with this kathenotheism only in a foot-note: "I will not speak of the hymns to 'all the gods', so numerous in the R̥igveda, in which, by turns, all the chief deities and also hosts of the smaller ones are extolled. I only call attention to the fact that, as we see more and more distinctly, the majority of the Vedic hymns were composed for a certain ritual purpose, *i. e.*, the Soma sacrifice, which even at that early period embraced, in its wide compass, the worship of nearly the whole ancient pantheon. The poets, who extolled Indra or Agni with that apparent henotheistic absorption in the worship of always one god, were experts in the ritual of sacrifice, and as such they knew

---

<sup>1</sup> L. v. Schröder, *ibid.*

exactly at which stage of the sacrifice, before or after which other gods, the one extolled by them had his place. My opinion is that the peculiarities of Vedic poetry, which seem to be henotheistic, find their explanation partly in the above described indefiniteness of outline peculiar to the Vedic deities, and partly in the politeness of the singer or priest to every one of the heavenly Lords, whom he, for the present, has the honour of addressing.”<sup>1</sup>

If such be the case, the halo of kathenotheism surrounding the Vedic conception of the Godhead must disappear at once. The term, indeed, may and will continue in use to give expression to the fact that in the Vedic hymns one God after the other (καθ' ἑνός) is invoked as the highest, but not as the only one. But we see how absolutely unjustifiable it is for educated Hindus to believe that Max Müller's kathenotheism is a kind of theism in accordance with modern thought. But it was also rather precipitate for Christian apologists, misled by the same term, to assume that at the bottom of this kathenotheism there was a definitely monotheistic belief, and that by this it was proved historically that the belief in one God was an original possession of the human race. We are not now concerned with this original monotheism. But we must frankly acknowledge that, as also Professor v. Schröder points out, the conception of the Godhead found throughout the hymns of the R̥gveda is not theism, much less monotheism, but decidedly a specific kind of polytheism which, for convenience' sake, may be called kathenotheism, the term “henotheism” being now used with quite a different meaning.

<sup>1</sup> *Religion des Veda*, p. 101.

## 2. THE ABSOLUTE SELF OF THEOSOPHICAL SPECULATION.

### SEARCH AFTER UNITY.

However indubitable it may be that in the Vedic hymns the belief in many individual gods predominates, it is quite as certain that the dissatisfaction with polytheism, the search for a unity in the plurality of gods, and with it theosophic speculation, may be traced as far back as the later hymns of the *Ṛigveda*. The beginnings of this development are probably to be found in what Oldenberg calls "the mixing up of types of gods", and Prof. v. Schröder, "the identification of the various deities". In the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* we may indeed observe the tendency to arrange the gods in pairs. As an instance of this we may take the pair of Mitra-Varuṇa. The pairs formed after this model generally show Indra in connection with another god, who is honoured by being received into the fellowship of that most powerful God.<sup>1</sup> We find the pairs of Indra-Varuṇa, Indra-Vāyu, Indra-Agni, Indra-Pūshan, Indra-Bṛihaspati, Indra-Vishṇu, Indra-Soma; but also Agni-Soma, Parjanya-Vāta, Soma-Pūshan, Soma-Rudra. It even happens that for these double-names only the first name is used in the dual, as, the two Mitras, the two Indras, etc., which always means the pair of gods mentioned in the context. With this another tendency is connected, *i. e.*, that of transferring the attributes and the work of one god to another. "Agni, not a soma-drinker by nature, became a soma-drinker in Indra's company; he became the Vṛitra-killer and the wielder of the thunder-bolt; he became like Indra the gainer of cows and water, of the sun and the early dawn."<sup>2</sup> The most remarkable thing with regard to this fact we find in the following passages quoted by Prof. v. Schröder:

---

<sup>1</sup> Oldenberg, *ibid.* p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Oldenberg, *ibid.* p. 99.

- 1 Thou at thy birth art Varuṇa, O Agni;  
when thou art kindled, thou becomest Mitra.  
In thee, O Son of Strength, all Gods are centred.  
Indra art thou to man who brings oblation.
- 2 Aryaman art thou as regardeth maidens:  
mysterious is thy name, O Self-sustainer.  
As a kind friend with streams of milk they balm thee,  
what time thou makest wife and lord one-minded.

*Rig. V, 3, 1. 2.*

The second half of the last verse may be rendered "like favourable Mitra" instead of "kind friend". However this may be, Agni here becomes one with four of the most distinguished deities and is, for the time being, identified with them. The same process is carried still further in the following passage:

- 3 Hero of Heroes, Agni! thou art Indra, thou  
art Viṣṇu of the Mighty Stride, adorable:  
Thou, Brahmanaspati, the Brahman finding wealth;  
thou, O Sustainer, with thy wisdom tendest us.
- 4 Agni, thou art King Varuṇa, whose laws stand fast,  
as Mitra, Wonder-worker, thou must be implored.  
Aryaman, heroes' Lord, art thou, enriching all,  
and liberal Amśa in the synod, O thou God.  
\* \* \* \* \*
- 6 Rudra art thou, the Asura of mighty heaven:  
thou art the Maruts' host, thou art the Lord of food,  
Thou goest with red winds: bliss hast thou in thine home,  
as Pūshan thou thyself protectest worshippers.
- 7 Giver of wealth art thou to him who honours thee;  
thou art God Savitar, granter of precious things.  
As Bhaga, Lord of men! thou rulest over wealth,  
and guardest in his house him who has served thee well.  
\* \* \* \* \*
- 11 Thou, God, art Aditi to him who offers gifts:  
thou, Hotra Bhāratī, art strengthened by the song.  
Thou art the hundred-wintered Iṣā to give strength,  
Lord of wealth! Vṛitra-slayer and Sarasvatī.

*Rig. II, 1. 3—11.*

Agni is here identified with all sorts of superior and inferior, older and younger deities, which, however, cannot be interpreted in the sense of theism or monism. The meaning of the poet is only that Agni does and is for his devotees

everything that the other gods do and are, as if, for instance, we were to say, he was both a brother and a friend to me. But from this mixing up of the deities and their functions, there is, indeed, but one step to the conception that the Supreme Being is but one. If Agni does for his devotees all that which all the other gods together used to do for them, why then worship the rest of them? And are there really many gods? In the early life of a nation, when imagination predominates in its mental life, and the childlike mind, without much reflexion, receives the impressions of the external world, the conception of the Godhead is liable to be split up and attached to a plurality of phenomena. But when the human mind is roused to independent thought, doubts will arise concerning the plurality of gods hitherto worshipped, and this will give rise to an effort to conceive the Supreme Being as one without a second. In the minds of the Indian Āryans such doubt arose much earlier than in the minds of Greek and Roman philosophers. It appears already in an ancient hymn addressed to Indra:

Of whom, the Terrible, they ask, where is He?  
 or verily they say of him, He is not.  
 He sweeps away like birds the foe's possessions.  
 Have faith in him, for He, O men, is Indra.

*Rig. II, 12, 5.*

### THE GOLDEN GERM.

This doubt and this impulse to speculation concerning the Godhead, once awakened, could find no rest till the knowledge was reached that the Godhead consisted of only one Being. Then at once the question as to the nature of this Supreme Being would arise. In the hymns of the R̥gveda we find various examples of this seeking after, and speculating on the nature of, the one Supreme Being. Of these examples we quote first the hymn of "The Golden Germ", which in fine poetry shows how in those times the Indo-Āryan mind strove to rise from the mists of polytheism to the clear heights of belief in

one God. In this hymn we see, as it were, the doubting question, as well as the triumphant answer to it, quivering on the lips of the poet:

- 1 In the beginning rose Hiranyagarbha,  
born Only Lord of all created beings.  
He fixed and holdeth up this earth and heaven.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 2 Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour,  
he whose commandments all the Gods acknowledge:  
The Lord of death, whose shade is life immortal.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 3 Who by his grandeur hath become Sole Ruler  
of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers;  
He who is Lord of men and Lord of cattle.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 4 His, through his might, are these snow-covered mountains,  
and men call sea and Rasā<sup>1</sup> his possession:  
His arms are these, his are these heavenly regions.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 5 By him the heavens are strong and earth is steadfast,  
by him light's realm and sky-vault are supported:  
By him the regions in mid-air were measured.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 6 To him, supported by his help, two armies  
embattled look while trembling in their spirit,  
When over them the risen Sun is shining.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 7 What time the mighty waters came, containing  
the universal germ, producing Agni,  
Thence sprang the Gods' one spirit into being.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 8 He in his might surveyed the floods, containing  
productive force and generating worship.  
He is the God of gods, and none beside him.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?
- 9 Ne'er may he harm us who is earth's Begetter,  
nor he whose laws are sure, the heavens' Creator,  
He who brought forth the great and lucid waters.  
What God shall we adore with our oblation?

<sup>1</sup> A mythical river in the sky.



- 10 Prajāpati! thou only comprehendest  
 all these created things, and none beside thee.  
 Grant us our hearts' desire when we invoke thee:  
 may we have store of riches in possession.

*Rig. X, 121.*

The poet tries to conceive the golden germ (*hiranyagarbha*) with which, according to v. 1, the development of the whole creation begins, as a personal deity (*ka?*); and, if v. 10 is not, as some think, a later addition, he actually extols him as the personal "Lord of Creatures" (*prajāpati*). But with the idea, that this germ in the beginning may have come into existence by itself, and at all events grew and developed out of itself, and then created, *i.e.*, caused to issue out of itself the whole world, including the rest of the gods, the Godhead became involved in the process of cosmogony, and with that the evolution of pantheistic ideas was set in motion. The golden germ, conceived as the personification of the absolute Self, has, therefore, found a permanent place in the Vedānta system.

### PURUSHA.

We find similar reflections in the celebrated Purushasūkta, the hymn of the primeval spirit. Its opening verses speak of the one Purusha, whose name afterwards simply designates the Supreme Spirit, the Absolute Self:

- 1 A thousand heads hath Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet.  
 On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.
- 2 This Purusha is all that yet hath been and all that is to be;  
 The Lord of Immortality, which waxes greater still by food.
- 3 So mighty is his greatness; yea, greater than this is Purusha.  
 All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths eternal life in heaven.
- 4 With three-fourths Purusha went up: one-fourth of him again was here.  
 Thence he strode out to every side over what eats not and what eats.
- 5 From him Viraj was born; again Purusha from Virāj was born.  
 As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward o'er the earth.

It is not quite clear what the theosophic poet means by the thousand heads, eyes, and feet of the primeval spirit.

Perhaps he intends to expand the human being, as it were, to infinity, so that the Universal Spirit is conceived as an infinite expansion of the human spirit. In v. 2, at all events, it is said in plain words that the Eternal Spirit is all that exists, and even the Lord of immortality, *i. e.*, even the immortal gods are dependent on him as the cause of their existence. Out of one-fourth of him all the earthly, visible creatures had their origin, and three-fourths of him represent the upper world of the immortal gods. Thus all the gods are not only summed up in, but also derived from, this Universal Spirit. In v. 5 he is described in the most paradoxical terms as the son of his own daughter Virāj, the shining one, *i. e.*, probably as the originator of his own existence (*causa sui*). Thus we already find here in a few words the substance of the later development of Indian pantheism. But the idea of a personal primeval Spirit does not seem to have been abandoned. Purusha, the Universal Spirit, the Absolute Self, is henceforward a permanent possession of theosophic speculation.

### BRAHMAN.

In course of time another idea of different origin was connected with this, which was also generalised and developed into a Divine Being, *viz.*, the idea of the Brahman. We remember that in the Vedic hymns prayer and worship were, in Brahmanaspati or Brihaspati, lifted up to the throne of the Godhead. From this fact began that development whose result was the most important conception of Indian philosophy, *i. e.*, the Brahman. The personal god Brahmanaspati, grown out of an abstract idea, was not quite incapable of such further development. Deussen draws attention to a passage in the hymns which already seems to point in that direction:

Thou who in every way supreme in earthly power,  
rejoicing, by thy mighty strength, hast waxen great,—  
He is the God spread forth in breadth against the Gods:  
he, Brahmanaspati, encompasseth this All.

*Rig. II, 24, 11.*

The only possible interpretation of this passage seems to be that Brahmanāspati, as the Lord of prayer, comes into existence here below, during the sacrifice, and develops into a god, till at last he receives into himself the whole universe and becomes the Supreme Being. But whatever may have been the meaning intended by the poet, the deity that grew out of devotional exercises, afterwards went through that development. We have seen before, how in prayer Brahman was considered as a power superior to the gods, influencing and directing them, and without which they seemed unable to accomplish their deeds. It was in accordance with the direction in which those speculations were already moving, that now the power of prayer and devotion was made the principle of all existence, absolute existence itself, from which was derived the existence of the whole universe, of the gods as well as of earthly creatures.

### SKAMBHA.

Another idea related to that of the Brahman, the idea of Skambha, the support or pillar of the world, appears in a hymn of the Atharvaveda, where the two ideas already mentioned, of the Purusha and the Brahman, and the idea of the Ātman, the Self, which is also related to the former, are combined with the idea of Skambha:

- 10 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
     in whom men recognise the Waters, Brahma,  
 In whom they know the worlds and their enclosures,  
     in whom are non-existence and existence?
- 11 Declare that Skambha, who is he of many,  
     in whom exerting every power, Fervour,  
 Maintains her loftiest vow, in whom are  
     comprehended Law, Waters, Devotions and Belief?
- \*        \*        \*        \*
- 19 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
     whose mouth they say is Holy Love,  
 Whose tongue the honey-sweetened whip,  
     his udder is Virāj, they say?

- 20 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
 From whom they hewed the Richas off,  
 From whom they chipped the Yajus, he  
 Whose hairs are Sāma verses and his mouth the Atharvāngirasas?
- 21 Men count as't were a thing supreme, nonentity's conspicuous branch;  
 And lower men who serve thy branch, regard it as an entity.

*Atharvaveda X, 7.*

Thus the whole universe, "existence and non-existence", *i. e.*, all that has the potentiality of existence in it, and all that actually exists, a number of religious acts, implements, products, and ideas are comprised in Skambha. It is the substance of spiritual and material existence. This idea is related to the Teutonic myth of the primeval giant Ymir, who is also conceived of as a primeval rock or pillar. But in the following verses this "pillar of the universe" is explicitly named Purusha and Brahman, further cosmic attributes being added:

- 15 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
 Who comprehendeth for mankind both immortality and death,  
 He who containeth for mankind the gathered waters as his veins?
- 16 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
 He whose chief arteries stand there,  
 The sky's four regions, he in whom sacrifice putteth forth its might?
- 17 They who in Purusha understand Brahman know Him who is supreme.  
 He who knows Him who is supreme, and he who knows the Lord of Life,  
 These know the loftiest Power Divine,  
 And thence know Skambha thoroughly.

It almost seems as if the author of this versified prose intended to propose a riddle with this Skambha, the pillar of the universe, and to reveal the solution of the riddle first with the word Purusha and then with the word Brahman. For all the attributes which were ascribed to Purusha and Brahman, are here transferred to Skambha. It is above all by the statement, that Fervour (v. 11), or the performance of austerities, and Sacrifice (v. 16) are accomplished in Skambha, that this pillar of the universe is brought into immediate relation to prayer, *i. e.*, Brahman. At the same time we already find here the tendency of those poet-philosophers to conceive the universe

as identified with the Godhead, the Divine Macrocosmos, in analogy with the microcosmos of man. It is interesting to observe how our poet hesitates to abandon the idea of a personal god: he uses the nominative of the masculine, *Brahmā*, and the nominative of the neuter, *Brahma*, by turns. We can well understand that these ancient sages found it hard to acquiesce in the thought that an impersonal power, an abstract principle, should have produced this great, teeming universe, including not only men but also the immortal gods themselves.

But now, where does Brahman himself come from, the primeval spirit of the universe, who is at the same time the pillar on which the whole spiritual and material universe rests? The answer, given in a verse of the same hymn, is as characteristic as it is paradoxical:

- 36 Homage to highest *Brahma*, him who sprung from Fervour and from toil,  
Filled all the worlds completely, who made *Soma* for himself alone.

Fervour and toil constitute the performance of austerities. Perhaps we should not understand austerities in a concrete sense, as meaning the performance of an individual ascetic. The poet probably understood the term in an abstract sense, as the principle of asceticism, hovering over, pervading, and directing all special performances. Only thus could he imagine that out of the fervour of ascetism the highest Brahman was born. Probably also the verse contains a reminiscence of the fact that the idea of the Brahman was first conceived by ascetics performing austerities.

### SŪTRA.

The following hymn, or rather meditation, is the sequel of those considered above. Its subject is the Brahman, during the further consideration of which, however, two new ideas are introduced, that of the *Sūtra*, the thread on which the creatures are strung after the fashion of a string of pearls, and

that of the Ātman, the Self, or Universal Soul. Later on these two conceptions were united in the idea of Sūtrātman, which has also obtained a permanent place in the Vedānta system:

- 1   Worship to loftiest Brahma, Lord,  
      of what hath been and what shall be,  
To him who rules the universe,  
      and heavenly light is all his own.
- 37   The man who knows the drawn-out string (sūtra)  
      on which these creatures all are strung,  
The man who knows the thread's thread, he  
      may know the mighty Brāhmaṇa.
- 43   Men versed in sacred knowledge know  
      that living Being that abides  
In the nine-portalled Lotus Flower,  
      enclosed with triple bands and bonds.
- 44   Desireless, firm, immortal, self-existent,  
      contented with the essence, lacking nothing,  
Free from all fear of Death is he who knoweth  
      that Soul courageous, youthful, undecaying.

*Atharv. X, 8.*

It is obvious that here, in the first place, the Brahman is identified with the Sūtra, the thread, the pearl-string of beings. This word seems also to contain a riddle, in which the thought is hidden, that it is the power of prayer, of sacred knowledge, which as the principle of existence inwardly holds together all existing creatures. Then there is introduced a "living Being" or "a Being resembling the Self" (v. 43), probably meaning, "similar to the human Self or Spirit", that being, which we are told, lies hidden in the lotus-house of nine doors. This lotus-house is the human body with its nine openings, eyes, ears, mouth, etc. Evidently we are to recognise in it the same Being which in v. 44 is simply called the Self, being at the same time adorned with the attributes that obviously mark it as the Absolute Self, the Universal Spirit, and thereby also identify it with the Brahman and the Purusha. Thus in our own individual Self we are to recognise the Absolute Self, the Brahman.

## ĀTMAN.

The idea of the Self appears here quite suddenly and requires some elucidation. In the hymns of the Ṛigveda, *ātman* means breath, and in the first place, the breath of man. But as breathing is the most essential characteristic of life, more especially of human life, *ātman* means the vital breath in man, his soul, his self. In the Ṛigveda the word is therefore most frequently used exactly like our pronoun self. In philosophic and theosophic literature it means the Self, the innermost life and nature of man, his soul or spirit. It has this meaning also in the above passage. But since Indian sages had begun to conceive the universe as identified with the Godhead, as the macrocosmos, in analogy with the human microcosmos, and at the same time to try and find out the innermost nature of this macrocosmos, the thought suggested itself to attribute an *ātman* or a Self to this Supreme Being, with which the Brahman, the principle of existence and growth in the universe, gradually came to be identified. The following passage from the Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad may serve to illustrate this process of amalgamation :

Verily in the beginning this was Brahman; that Brahman knew (its) self only, saying, "I am Brahman". From it the universe originated. Therefore now also he who knows thus that he is Brahman, becomes the universe, and even the Gods cannot prevent it, for he himself is their Self. *Bṛihadār. Up. I, 4, 10.*

With distinct reference to the pronominal use of the word *ātman*, it is here declared that the Brahman is the whole universe and at the same time the Self, the innermost nature of the gods. Therefore it is said in a later part of this work, "In the beginning was this Self (*ātman*)"; and then the author says of the Ātman exactly the same things as were said before of the Brahman. Both words now designate one and the same being.

Deussen assumes that the idea of the Brahman originally belonged to the priestly classes, whereas that of the Ātman

was the property of philosophic circles in the Kshatriya-caste. This assumption finds a certain confirmation in the fact that in the Upanishads princes and their friends often appear sedulously engaged in the discussion of questions concerning the Self, the Ātman. The priestly Brāhmaṇas then would, by means of their idea of the Brahman, encounter the tide of speculation on the part of Kshatriya philosophers and direct it into their own channels, in order to make it serve their interests. However that may be, in the course of time the Brahman came to be interpreted in a new and different way, its origin from prayer and devotion was put aside and another derivation was invented:

The word Brahman, which is to be derived from the root *brih*=to be high, to be great, to rise, means growth, greatness. This greatness is unlimited in space, time, and substance, no limiting differences of measure clinging to it. It properly means a principle (literally, a law) of infinite meaning.<sup>1</sup>

The former ritual meaning of the word Brahman is here completely ignored and a meaning suitable to the philosophical use of the word substituted: the Brahman has become a law, or, as we should say, a principle, from which all human and divine, material and transcendental existence is derived. Thus the idea of a personal Supreme Being has been completely abandoned.

### HOW TO KNOW THE BRAHMAN?

The consideration and development of this principle, now named Brahman, or Ātman, or Puruṣa, or sometimes simply Sat, *i.e.*, the existent, the entity, forms the main substance of the Upanishads. The first question which arises now is whether and how the Brahman is knowable. We have tried to sketch the historical growth of this idea, so far as the sources admit of it. But now the question is, How can individual man attain to the knowledge of this Divine Being. In the Chhāndogya

<sup>1</sup> Ānandagiri's Gloss to Śāṅkara's Commentary on the Taittirīya Upanishad.



Upanishad VI, 1, 2 ff., a Brāhmaṇa asks his son, who, after twelve years' study, has just returned home, full of pride and learned conceit, whether his teacher also taught him that thing "by which the inaudible becomes audible, the inconceivable becomes conceivable, and the unknowable knowable"; in other words, whether he has been initiated into the knowledge of the Brahman. The son begins to reflect and says, "What is that instruction, O venerable one?"—With this the question is distinctly stated. We may first consider the negative part of the answer, *viz.*, how the Brahman cannot be known?

To it the eye does not reach, to it the ear does not reach, to it the understanding does not reach. We do not know, we do not perceive how to communicate it. It is different from the known and from the unknown. Thus we also hear from our ancestors, who have instructed us about it (3). What does not reveal itself by the word and by which first the word is revealed (4); what is not perceived by the understanding and by which, as they say, thinking is thought (5); what one does not behold with the eye, by which the eyes are beheld (6); what one does not hear with the ear, by which the ear is heard (7); what one does not breathe through breath, by which breath is breathed—even that I perceive as Brahman, and not that which is commonly worshipped as such (8). *Kena Up. I, 1, 3—8.*

Hence the Brahman is to be perceived neither through the senses nor through the understanding, *i. e.*, the inner sense (*manas*), which works out the perceptions of the senses. On the other hand, all the activity of the senses and the mind is traced back to the Brahman alone. This Self is the working principle in all human activity. This alone the sage admits to be Brahman, but not that which was commonly worshipped as such, that is, not the personal god Brahmā or any other personal god. A similar passage occurs in Bṛihadār. Up. III, 8, 11:

This imperishable thing is unseen but seeing; unheard but hearing; unperceived but perceiving; unknown but knowing. There is nothing that sees but it, nothing that hears but it, nothing that perceives but it, nothing that thinks but it. In that imperishable then the ether is woven like warp and woof.

Another passage of the same work states in yet stronger terms that the Self, or the Brahman, cannot be perceived by

the ordinary means of perception, and at the same time gives a hint how it may be perceived. A pupil named Ushasta asked the celebrated sage Yājñavalkya about the true Self, and the sage answered: "This is thy Self in what is innermost of all things." "Which Self, O Yājñavalkya, in what is innermost of all things?" to which the master answers:

Thou canst not see the seer of sight, thou canst not hear the hearer of hearing, nor perceive the perceiver of perception, nor know the knower of knowledge. This is thy Self in what is innermost of all things. Everything beside it is grief. *Bṛihadār. Up. III, 4, 2.*

The Self, which is here identical with the Brahman, is thus described as the subject, as the working principle of all intellectual activity in man; this means that the individual Self of man is at the same time the Absolute Self. Accordingly he who wants to know the Absolute Self must look inward into his own inner self; if there he perceives his own innermost life and being, he at the same time perceives the Brahman.

#### THE TRUE NATURE OF THE BRAHMAN.

What then is the nature of the Brahman more accurately? The answer to this question is in the first place to be found in what has been said about the perceptibility of the Brahman. It is contained in the famous "great word", *tattvamasi = that art thou*. The connection, in which this saying appears historically, leads us to the most important attribute ascribed to the Brahman, *viz.*, that of being or existence. In the Chhândogya Upanishad we read a conversation of the Brāhmaṇa Aruṇi with his son Śvetaketu, the introduction of which through the question of his son, "How is it with this instruction?" has been given above (p. 94). In the course of the conversation Aruṇi instructs his son about the Brahman, and he says among other things:

In that which is, all these creatures have their root, in that which is, they have their place, in that which is, their existence. This is the most

subtile essence of things. This whole universe is of a spiritual nature. That is the real, that is the Self; that art thou, O Śvetaketu. *Chhānd. Up. VI, 8, 6. 7.*

Accordingly, the Brahman is the only really existing thing, in which alone all things have their existence, which pervades all things as a sublime, spiritual substance, so that the whole universe is spiritual in its true nature. With this absolute Self individual man in the person of Śvetaketu is identified. Then Aruṇi continues :

As the bees, my son, make honey by collecting the juices of different trees, and reduce the juice into one form, and as these juices have no discrimination, so that they might say, I am the juice of this tree or that, in the same manner these creatures, when they have become merged in the True, know not that they are merged in the True. Whatever these creatures are here, whether a lion, or a wolf, or a boar, or a worm, or a midge, or a gnat, or a mosquito, that they become again and again. This is the most subtile essence of things; this whole universe is of a spiritual nature. That is the Real, that is the Self, that art thou, O Śvetaketu. *Chhānd. Up. VI, 9. 1.*

Here we have to explain the "great word", *That art thou (tat tvam asi)*. Leaving aside, for the present, the interpretation given by the Vedānta school, we will try to grasp the meaning suggested by the context and the wording. The word *tat* means the really existing thing, the most subtile essence of things, the spiritual nature of the universe, the Absolute Self, the Brahman. With the words *that art thou*, Śvetaketu, *i. e.*, individual man, is identified with that Absolute Self.

### ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE.

In this the principal attribute of the Brahman is already stated. It is that which is, the absolutely existing thing. For in the existing thing all things are blended, as the juice of various plants is blended in honey. This is said in another passage of the same work, which is likewise considered as one of the great words of philosophic Hinduism—*Chhānd. Up. VI, 1, 1. 2*:

In the beginning, my dear, there was that which is, one only without a second. Others indeed say, "In the beginning there was that only which is not, one only without a second, and from that which is not, that which is was born". But how could this be, my dear,—he, the teacher, said—how could that

which is, be born of that which is not? Therefore, my dear, only that which is, was in the beginning, one only, without a second (*sattveva somyedam agre āsid ekamevādvitīyam*).

Two things are here emphatically stated of the Brahman, which we must understand to be intended by the word "this". First, that it existed in the beginning as a thing which was, or, that it was the existing thing. Thus existence is the principal attribute of the Brahman. Secondly, its absolute singleness is emphasized. To it alone belongs the attribute of existence, and beside it nothing exists. What is, is only in and with the Brahman. At the time of our author, however, there were people who asserted, "Non-existent was this in the beginning". Among these is also the author of the Taittiriya Upanishad, where we read in II, 7 :

In the beginning this was non-existent. From it was born what exists. That made its own Self, therefore it is called the Self-made. Because it is self-made it is the marrow of things. If a man gains this marrow, he is blessed.

This sage, then, was not content to put the existent at the beginning of all things and to let the world and its individual beings grow out of it. On the contrary, he says, that at the beginning "this" was non-existent. But what does he mean by "this"? If he means the Brahman, his thought was that once also the Brahman did not exist and then came into existence through itself. This is an impossible thought. Therefore the Vedānta scholiast is probably right in explaining the Non-existent as only meaning undeveloped, simple, pure existence. In that case it would be more appropriate to understand "this" as meaning the developed universe with its individual beings. This multifarious universe—according to the above passage—would have grown out of undeveloped, pure existence. We must so much the more recognise this explanation as correct, as immediately before the above passage we read:

The Self wished, May I become many, may I engender! It performed penance. After having performed penance it created this universe. Having created all that belongs to the universe, it entered into it. As soon as it had entered into it, it became the existent. *Taitt. Up. II, 6.*

Here we have really an authentic exposition of what the author calls *sat*, the Existent, and *asat*, the Non-existent. The universe becomes existent by the Self, or the Brahman, creating it out of itself and entering into it. Previous to that it was non-existent, *i. e.*, undeveloped. But the Self, the Brahman, is now as before absolute existence. It is also absolute existence in the sense of being imperishable. Very frequently it is called so in the Upanishads. Thus, for instance, in Muṇḍaka Up. I, 1, 5 two kinds of knowledge, one higher and the other lower, are distinguished. The lower knowledge is that of the Vedic texts and of the means which aid in their correct interpretation:

But the higher knowledge is that by which that Imperishable is known, which is invisible and incomprehensible; which has no sex, no colour, no eyes, no ears; which is without hands and feet, eternal, penetrating, omnipresent, very fine and unchangeable, and which the wise know as the womb of what has become.

This Imperishable, according to the description, is nothing else but the Brahman, absolute existence, beside which there is nothing of independent significance.

This attribute of the Brahman is spoken of in a dialogue between the wise Yājñavalkya and a philosophic lady named Gārgī. It is to be found in the Bṛihadār. Up. Gārgī asks the master:

That of which they say that it is above the heavens, beneath the earth, embracing heaven and earth, past, present, and future, tell me in what it is woven, like warp and woof?

The question is doubtless for the absolute, true Being. The answer is:

That of which they say that it is above the heavens, beneath the earth, between heaven and earth, which is seen as past, present, and future, that is woven, like warp and woof, in the ether. Gārgī: In what then is the ether woven like warp and woof? Yājñavalkya: It is just that which the Brāhmans call the Imperishable. It is neither coarse nor fine, neither short nor long, neither ruddy like fire nor insinuating like water; not shadowy, not dark, not air-like, not etherial, not clinging; without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without voice, without mind, without brightness, without breath,

without mouth, without measure, without inside, without outside; it eats not and is not eaten by anybody. By the will of that Imperishable, O Gārgī, sun and moon stand apart. By the will of this Imperishable minutes and hours, days and nights, half-months and months, seasons and years stand apart. By the will of that Imperishable the rivers stream from the white mountains, some to the east, others to the west or to any other quarter. By his will men praise those who are liberal, the gods follow the sacrificer, and the (dead) fathers the sacrificial spoon (the oblation for the dead). Verily, O Gārgī, whosoever, without yet knowing this Imperishable in this world, sacrifices and worships, and performs penance for many thousand years, he will only get the Perishable. Verily, O Gārgī, whosoever departs from this world without knowing this Imperishable, he is badly off. But whosoever, O Gārgī, departs from this world with the knowledge of the Imperishable, he is a relative of Brahma (*i. e.* homogeneous to the absolute Brahman). This Imperishable, verily, O Gārgī, is unseen but seeing, unheard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving, unknown but knowing. There is nothing that sees but it, nothing that hears but it, nothing that perceives but it, and nothing that knows but it. In that Imperishable, O Gārgī, the ether is woven like warp and woof. *Bṛihadūr. Up. III, 8, 6—12.*

The Imperishable (*akshara*) is, of course, the Brahman. As in space, or in the ether, all visible things are placed, interwoven with one another and interwoven with the ether, like warp and woof, so on the other hand, space, which is pervaded by the ether, is interwoven with the Imperishable and has its existence in it only. The author then describes this imperishable Brahman as an absolutely immaterial, spiritual entity, by adducing all the material categories known to him, and stating that they are not applicable to the Brahman. So then anything personal in the Brahman is absolutely out of the question. Nevertheless the Imperishable has a will or a command, which the whole material and spiritual world must obey. We may remember here that in Schopenhauer's school also "the will to live" is ascribed to the Unconscious, or that "the world as will" is philosophically described without the suggestion of a personal being. No more is the Brahman here a self-conscious person, but it is conceived as the active principle in all the movements of life. In concluding this consideration of the Brahman as absolute existence we quote a passage from the Kāṭha Upanishad, contained in the celebrated dialogue of the youth Nachiketas with Yama, the god of the dead.

Nachiketas had been handed over to death by his father and thus came into the house of Yama (Hades). The latter permitted him to ask for three boons:

O Brāhmaṇa, as thou, a venerable guest, hast dwelt in my house three nights without eating, therefore choose now three boons. *Kāth. Up. I, 1, 9.*

His first two wishes have nothing to do with our question. His third wish is as follows:

There is that doubt, when a man is dead, some say, he continues to live, others say, he does not. This I should like to know, taught by thee; this is the third of my wishes.

The following is part of Yama's answer to this question:

The Self is not born, it dies not, it sprang from nothing, nothing sprang from it. It is for ever birthless and has ever been so. If the body is killed, it is not killed. He who striking thinks he slays the other, and he who struck thinks he is slain—both these have not the true knowledge: the Self slays not, neither is it slain. The Self, smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, lies hidden within the living. He who is without will beholds painless, in the serene tranquillity of his senses, this greatness, the Self. Even while resting it goes far away; in sleep it wanders in all directions. Who, save myself, can know it—the deity ever anew drunk with joy? Itself without a body, it is in all the bodies; unchangeable it is in all changing things. The wise man who knows the great and all-pervading essence as his Self is free from grief. *Kāth. Up. I, 2, 18-22.*

As the Self, the Brahman, is the absolute Being, it is also eternal, without beginning and without end. It owes its existence to no other being, neither does it give existence to another being like itself, as human parents do; it does not destroy anything and is itself not liable to destruction, for the simple reason that it is the existent in all individual existence. It is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest, because it is an immaterial, spiritual principle, to which the proportions of material things do not apply. It need not move from its place in order to reach remote places, as in sleep the human soul wanders in all directions without stirring from its place. In reality the Brahman is "pervading", or omnipresent, pervading all beings with its own essence; it is the absolute

Soul, which asserts itself in all bodies as the individual Soul. Such is the true, absolute existence of the Brahman.

### ABSOLUTE LIGHT.

But the Brahman is also the absolute light, which shines in its own inexhaustible splendour. We may call this luminousness the second essential attribute of the Brahman. This finds expression in the classical passage, *Mund. Up.* II, 2, 10; *Kaṭh. Up.* v, 15, and *Śvetāśvatara Up.* VI, 14:

The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, nor earthly fire. When it shines, everything shines after it, by its light all this is lighted.

The Brahman, which is the subject of this passage, has not borrowed its light from a created source of light in heaven or on earth, but it is itself the primeval light, from which all created light issues and which shines only in its own lustre. It is therefore often called the light of lights:

In that highest golden shrine lies the Brahman pure and undivided. Those who know the Self know the brightly beaming light of lights. *Mund. Up.* II, 2, 9.

The golden shrine in which the pure, undivided, and indivisible Brahman is imbedded is the ether of universal space and at the same time the ether enclosed in the heart of man. But only he who has come to know in his own Self the absolute Self possesses the sunlike eye which can see this light of lights. Brahman is the absolute light. We read the same in *Bṛihadār. Up.* IV, 4, 16:

That behind which the year revolves with the days, that the gods worship as the light of lights, as the Immortal.

Now the question arises, In what sense is the Brahman "the brightly beaming light of lights"? The passages quoted already clearly show that the physical phenomenon of light is out of the question. Nor may these sayings be placed side by side with the biblical word, "God is light and in Him is



no darkness", for here the moral light of pure holiness is meant, whereas the Brahman has no ethical attributes. What is intended here is intellectual light. That must be inferred from those passages which describe the Brahman as the thinker of thought, the knower of knowledge, the thing which is unthought but thinking, which is unknown but knowing. Several of those passages have been quoted already. Other passages state it with distinct clearness:

The Self is manifest, present, hidden in the interior of things, the great place where everything that moves, that breathes, that blinks, is laid down. You know it as being and not-being, as the most excellent, which is superior to the knowledge of creatures; as flaming, as smaller than the smallest, as that in which the worlds together with their inhabitants are laid down. This imperishable Brahman is the breath of life, it is speech, it is mind. That is indeed the Real, the Immortal. That learn to know, O my friend, that is the aim. *Mund. Up. II, 2, 1. 2.*

If here the Brahman is called manifest, or as the scholiast observes, as luminous, as flaming, and at the same time as the mind,—only one interpretation of these terms is possible, *i.e.*, that its light is an intellectual luminousness. Therefore the Brahman can also be called all-understanding and all-knowing and the brightest of all lights:

That which understands all and knows all, its glory is on the earth. In the heavenly Brahma-castle, in the ether, there is the Self. Consisting of the mind, it becomes the breath of life and the guide of the body. It is contained in food. The wise, in directing their hearts to it, behold it through knowledge, the blessed Being, the Immortal which sends out rays of light.—The knots of the heart are split, all doubts are solved, the fruit of the works vanishes, if one beholds this Highest of all. *Mund. Up. II, 2, 7—9.*

Thus the Brahman is not only absolute existence, but also the absolute light, which with its intellectual, beaming brightness pervades the universe.

### BLISS.

In the golden shrine, consisting of bliss, in the hearts of men, rests "the blissful Being (*ānandarūpa*)". This leads us

to a further essential attribute of the Brahman, *viz.*, bliss. Perhaps also the attribute of light has a suggestion of bliss in it. It is true that the passages containing the attribute of bliss are not numerous. But there are occasional allusions to the bliss, the joy, the happiness of the Brahman. In the Brihadāranya Upanishad the wise Yājñavalkya sums up the doctrine of the Brahman in the following words:

The Brahman is knowledge and bliss, the gift of the generous one, the ultimate aim of him who knows it and stands firm in it. *Bṛihadār. Up. II, 9, 28.*

In another place we read of the inner Self, which is at the same time the Absolute Self, as follows:

Different from this Self, which consists of knowledge, is the inner Self, which consists of bliss . . . . Love is its head, joy its right side, gladness its left side, bliss is its body. *Taittirīya Up. II, 5.*

Another passage is to the same effect:

Where there is no darkness, there is neither day nor night, neither existence nor non-existence, but only pure, complete bliss (*śiva eva kevala*). That is the Imperishable, that is the Desirable of the god Savitar, therefrom streameth the ancient wisdom. *Śvetāśvatara Up. IV, 18.*

To understand the meaning of this passage we must refer to the so-called Gāyatrī (p. 46). There the splendour of the god Savitar, *i.e.*, probably the splendour of the sun, is called the Desirable. So here also we find light and bliss together, and at the same time from light flows ancient wisdom, so that light may mean both bliss and thought or knowledge.

In the Chhāndogya Upanishad a pupil, whose master did not want to initiate him into the secret doctrine of the Brahman, complains: "Numerous and manifold are the lusts in this man. I am full of infirmities and do not like to eat." Then, while the master is absent, the sacrificial fires in the master's house instruct him about the Brahman: "Breath of life is the Brahman, joy is the Brahman, width (ether) is the Brahman". He replies, "That I know that the Brahman is breath of life, but joy and width, — I do not know them". Then the fires inform him —

for the most part in terms already known to us—that the universe spread in infinite space is really nothing else but the Brahman. Now, when his master comes home, he observes that his pupil has tasted of the Brahma doctrine: “Thy face, my dear, beams like that of a man knowing the Brahman; who has instructed thee?” When, after some excuses, the pupil confesses the truth, the teacher crowns the pupil’s knowledge:

The man, who is seen in the eye, he is the Self. This is the Immortal, this is the Fearless, this is the Brahman . . . He is called the gathering place of happiness, for all that is happy streams together here. And all that is happy gathers near him who knows that He is the bringer of happiness, for he has upon him all that is happy. He is the light-bringer, for he shines in all the worlds; and he that knows shines in all the worlds. *Chhândog. Up. IV, 10—15.*

Here again the Brahman comprises all joy, happiness and bliss. Therefore the fires could say, “Joy is the Brahman”.

According to our view, bliss, joy and happiness presuppose personal self-consciousness. Abstract bliss, apart from living persons, does not seem possible to us. It is different with the sages of the Upanishads. If their Vedântist commentators are not quite mistaken—and we shall see that they are right—bliss, happiness and joy are here the attribute of an impersonal being. This is not quite incomprehensible, if we remember that in reality this attribute of bliss only means that no suffering, no pain, no grief can touch the Brahman. In the passages already considered this has been suggested occasionally. In the following passage it is directly and distinctly stated:

The golden man seen in the sun, the golden-bearded, golden-haired, consisting of gold even to the points of his nails—his eyes are like a lotus-flower, his name is “Upward!” For he is above all suffering. He who knows that rises high above all suffering. *Chhândog. Up. I, 6.*

In another passage the pupil Kahola asks his master Yājñavalkya:

“The true, present Brahman, which as the Self lives in the innermost of all creatures, that explain to me!”—“That is thine own Self in the innermost of all creatures.”—“Which Self, Yājñavalkya, in the innermost of all creatures?”

"That Self which rises above hunger and thirst, above the grief of delusion, old age, death. . . . What is different from it, that is distress." *Bṛihadār. Up. III, 5.*

The Brahman, which man finds within him as his own Self, is, according to this passage, beyond all suffering, all grief, all pain. To be beyond the sufferings of individual existence, beyond the sufferings and pains of transmigration, is what the sages of the Upanishads call the bliss of the Brahman. The true essence of the Brahman, therefore, may be summed up in the three attributes of absolute existence, intellectual light, and bliss free from suffering.

#### IMPERSONAL.

We have already had occasion to observe that the attributes just now mentioned do not appertain to a personal Being, but, according to the Upanishads, to an impersonal principle.

This becomes evident beyond doubt by the doctrine of the four conditions of the Brahman, the absolute and individual Self. In the Upanishads the famous sacred syllable *Om*, also called *Pranava*, is often considered as the symbolical representation of the Brahman: "*Pranavam brahmano nedi-shtham pratikam, i. e., the syllable Om is the emblem most nearly approaching the Brahman.*" According to Indian phonetics, the sound O is composed of A and U, and that syllable therefore consists of the sounds A, U, M. Taking each sound separately and then the three sounds together, we get four components of that syllable: 1, A; 2, U; 3, M; 4, OM. Corresponding to these four components and in connection with them the four conditions of the Brahman are set forth in the *Māṇḍūkya Up. I, 1, 2 ff.* The whole exposition is somewhat ambiguous. In reading it one is always inclined to ask whether the author speaks of the absolute or the individual Self. But we must not forget that to him the absolute Self is completely identical with the individual Self. As the teacher Pippalāda says in the *Praśna Upanishad*: "Truly, Satyakāma, that which we call the syllable Om

is the higher and the lower Brahman." The lower Brahman is indeed not exactly the same as the individual Self, but it approaches very near to it, as it includes all personal beings. We now proceed to quote the exposition of the meaning of this mystic syllable according to the Māṇḍūkya Up. I, 1, 2:

The syllable Om is the universe. Its interpretation is, that which has been, that which is, that which will be. Everything is only the syllable Om. And what else is beyond threefold time, all that is the syllable Om. For all that is Brahman; this Self is Brahman; and this Self is in four parts. Compare I, 8: This very Self stands in relation to the syllable Om and its sounds. The sounds are the quarters and the quarters are the sounds—the A-sound, the U-sound, the M-sound.

Now what about these separate sounds and quarters?

1. The first sound is the Self in its waking condition; with its knowledge directed to external objects, endowed with seven members and nineteen openings, enjoying the sensual, living in all men. I, 3.

What the author speaks of here, is the individual Self that dwells in all men, and also of the aggregate of all individual souls as representing the Self in its empirical appearance. It knows what is without, *i. e.*, its knowledge is concerned with the objects of the senses; therefore it has no knowledge worth the name, but is under the spell of ignorance (*avidyā*), which subsequently became the cosmic principle of illusion. According to the commentators, the seven members of the Self are to be understood as follows: the sky is its head, the sun its eye, the wind its breath, the air its body, wealth its bladder, the earth its feet, the sacrificial fire its mouth. According to the same authority the nineteen openings are the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, the five vital airs, the inner sense (the mind), the intellect, self-consciousness, and will. With the above we must consider I, 9:

The soul in the waking condition, Vaiśvānara, is the letter A, the first sound, for it permeates all speech and stands at the beginning. He who knows this, obtains all desires and becomes the first of all men.

Vaiśvānara is a surname of the god Agni and designates him as present with, and benefiting, all men. This name is

here given to the Self in the waking condition, because it comprises all individual souls. Corresponding to this, the individual soul is called *Viśva*, *i. e.*, every one. As *Vaiśvānara*, the Self is represented by the first component of the syllable *Om*, the A-sound, the first sound of the alphabet, which, at the same time, is inherent in, and pronounced with, every consonant. In the same way *Vaiśvānara* stands at the head of all existence and is also present in every individual soul. This entity then is a personified abstraction.

2. The second quarter is the soul in the condition of dreaming sleep; knowing internally, with seven members, nineteen openings, enjoying the subtle, consisting of light (*taijasa*). *I, 4.*

As the gates of the senses are closed in sleep, the soul here knows internally. The images of the objects of the external world perceived in the waking condition, the intuitive pictures lingering in the imagination, are the materials of which knowledge is built up in dreaming. These images, belonging half to the material, half to the intellectual world, are the subtle substance, on which the Self feeds, which it "enjoys" in a dream. The Self is here called *Taijasa*, consisting of light. This, however, does not, like *Vaiśvānara*, denote the aggregate of souls, but it means the single individual soul. The personified aggregate of all individual souls in this condition was — at least later on — called *Hiranyagarbha*, the golden germ, *Sūtrātman*, the Self of the pearl-string, and also *Prāṇa*, the breath of life. In the mystic syllable it is the U-sound that corresponds to the Self in this condition:

The soul in its dreaming condition, called *Taijasa*, is the letter U, the sound second in rank, because it is placed between the two others. He who knows this, increases the sum of his knowledge and becomes homogeneous (to the Brahman). In his family there is none who does not know the Brahman. *I, 10.*

We must remember here that the U-sound blends with the A-sound into an O-sound, being assimilated, as it were, to the preceding sound. Corresponding to this, man becomes homogeneous to the Brahman, when he has grasped the doctrine set forth here.

3. The soul in deep sleep has no desire and dreams no dream. The third quarter is the soul in deep sleep; being one in itself, a uniform mass of knowledge, consisting of bliss, enjoying bliss, accessible through consciousness, endowed with the highest knowledge. This is the Lord of all, this the All-knowing, this the inner Guide, this the Womb of all things, out of which all creatures issue and to which they all return. I, 6.

We are now approaching the pure, absolute Self. The condition of absolutely dreamless sleep, in which all perceptions of the senses, all imaginations resulting from them, all consciousness of being an individual soul, and accordingly all the limits of self-consciousness cease to exist — this condition is the nearest approach to the pure, absolute Brahman, but not yet the condition of the Brahman itself. The Self in the above mentioned condition consists of a homogeneous mass of cognition; the separate souls, as it were, blend with one another like liquids of the same kind; they are united, and no individual consciousness separates them. Their essence is happiness and bliss, and they enjoy this their own essence. Their bliss has no object outside their own selves. The pains and sufferings of transmigration or the tormenting imaginations of it are gone. As far as we may here speak of an individual soul, it is called *Prājña*, having knowledge; for it has come to know its own identity with the absolute Self. The purely abstract, personified aggregation of individual souls is here called *Sarveśvara*, Lord of all, in other places simply *Īśvara*, Lord; further, the All-knowing, because here the soul already knows itself as the absolute Self, the Brahman, and therefore knows all; the inner Guide, because the absolute Self is the active and impelling principle in all the movements of living creatures. This *Īśvara* is considered as the Creator of the world, for in him there is included *Avidyā*, ignorance, which creates the separate consciousness of individual souls and with this the false conception of the multiform individual creatures of the world. This condition, therefore, is not yet the pure condition of the absolute Self, the true Brahman. As the soul awakes again from its dreamless sleep, so in this condition individual consciousness, or the remembrance of it, is not quite extinct, the consciousness of

identity has not yet gained absolute sway. The M-sound in the mystic syllable corresponds to this condition:

The soul in deep sleep, called *Prājña*, is the letter M, the third sound, because comprehensive knowledge and the aim of the two foregoing is gained only here. He who knows this, comprehends the whole universe and reaches the goal (enters the Brahman). *I, 11.*

It is to be observed that the M-sound closes the syllable. So there is here conclusive knowledge, and *Īśvara* is the comprehensive aggregation of all individual souls.

4. That which knows neither internally nor externally nor in both directions, which is not a mass of knowledge, neither knowing nor not-knowing; the invisible, which cannot be the object of practical activity; the inconceivable, the thing without characteristic distinctions, the unthinkable, the unspeakable; that which can be reached only through the knowledge of the unity of the Self; that in which the multiform universe is abolished, the calm, the blissful, the non-duality — that is deemed to be the fourth. This is the Self; this is to be known. *I, 7.*

The Self is here on purpose no longer described as a person, but as a neuter, we may say, as an impersonal principle. Accordingly its attributes are for the most part negative. All individual consciousness, all remembrance, nay every trace of it, has disappeared. There is no longer any difference between the subject and the object of knowledge. What is left is a solitary, calm, motionless, indifferent entity, which is at the same time knowing, knowledge, and known. One only without a second. Only by means of an ecstatic vision, which has likewise abandoned the limits of individual consciousness, this entity may be reached and at the same time union with it accomplished. Of course, this absolute Brahman can be called blissful only in so far as there is here no room for suffering and pain, for the latter always presupposes a personal being. The Self in this fourth condition is symbolically represented by the whole syllable *Om*:

The fourth is not a single sound, but the whole syllable *Om*; it is not an object of practical activity, but the dissolution of multiform bliss, non-duality. The Self goes through the Self into the Self, if one knows this. *I, 12.*



As the syllable Om includes its three component sounds, so the three former conditions, which, as we have seen, have no independent existence, are really included in this fourth condition, of which they are indeed only a transitory reflected image. Here we have the pure state of the absolute Brahman, into which everything must return. It is to be remembered that this fourth condition is even beyond dreamless sleep, so that self-consciousness is now absolutely out of the question.

It is impossible to state in stronger terms than is done here, that the Brahman is an absolutely impersonal entity. Swāmi Vivekānanda calls this fourth condition "super-consciousness", and contends that the condition of dreamless sleep lies in the opposite direction and not beneath the "threshold of consciousness". Now, in the first place, it is difficult to say what he means by "super-consciousness"; and, secondly, the fourth condition lies in the same direction as dreamless sleep. The order is as follows: waking condition, dreaming sleep, dreamless sleep, fourth condition. If even deep sleep falls beneath "the threshold of consciousness", the fourth condition must fall a degree lower, and hence be a yet more unconscious condition. Super-consciousness, therefore, is out of the question. To the sages of the Upanishads, however, the fourth condition is the highest and most transcendental condition conceivable, for this very reason that in it every shadow of self-consciousness is abolished. The state of waking consciousness, which is essentially self-consciousness, is considered by them as the lowest and most impure condition.

#### WITHOUT MORAL ATTRIBUTES.

An entity, which is without any personal self-consciousness, cannot possibly have any moral qualities. Even most Vedic gods show a serious want of moral attributes. After their dissolution into the impersonal Brahman the last remnant of a moral nature must of necessity disappear. In the Upanishads it is frankly avowed that to the Brahman in its purest form of

existence moral attributes can no more be applied than the opposites of great and small, cold and warm, pleasure and pain, well-being and suffering:

Really these thoughts do not arise to the Self: "I have committed sin, I have done good." It is superior to either; it is not affected by what it has done and what it has not done. Therefore, it is said in a verse: He who knows the Brahman, does not become greater by good works, nor smaller by evil works. Let him be familiar with that! And if he knows that, he will not be sullied by evil works. *Bṛihad. Up. IV, 4, 22. 23.*

The scholiast Ānandagiri expressly remarks, with reference to this passage, that we are here concerned with an absolutely indifferent being, without the opposites of good and evil, virtue and vice. And he quotes *Bṛihad. Up. iv, 3, 22*:

A father is no longer father, a mother no longer mother, the world no longer world, the gods are no longer gods, the Veda is no longer Veda. A thief is no longer a thief, a criminal (a particular crime is referred to) is not a criminal, an outcast is not an outcast, . . . an ascetic is no longer an ascetic. Untouched by good, untouched by evil, the Self has got rid of all grief of the heart.

This passage treats only of the Self in the condition of dreamless sleep (*sushupti*), where the aggregate of souls, personified in Īśvara, is united. If already in this condition the opposites of good and evil have disappeared, how much more must that be the case with the pure Self in the fourth condition? In reality all positive qualities disappear there, wherefore it is said again and again, "The Self must be described by the words: not so, not so (*neti, neti*)". *Bṛihad. Up. III, 9. 26; IV, 2, 4; 4, 22; 5, 15; V, 3, 6.* According to the general view of the Upanishads, the Brahman is absolute existence, intellectual light, and painless bliss; but moral attributes cannot be ascribed to it.

### 3. THE CONCEPTION OF THE GODHEAD IN THE PHILOSOPHIC SCHOOLS.

#### THE SĀṆKHYA ON THE GODHEAD.

The most ancient of the philosophic schools, the Sāṅkhya-darśana, in its original shape contradicts in the most marked way the doctrine of the Upanishads about the Ātman or the Brahman. Whereas the teaching of the latter results in absolute monism, the Sāṅkhya doctrine is downright dualism. In this dualism, according to which *Prakṛiti* or primordial matter, and *Puruṣa* or Spirit are directly opposed to each other in an existence without beginning and without end, there is no more room for the absolute Brahman of the Upanishads, than for an almighty personal God who created the world. On the one hand, Spirit is conceived as an infinite plurality of individual souls, whose union in one absolute Spirit is directly denied and refuted in detail, while at the same time the deities of the common people (*janyeśvara*, *kāryeśvara*) are unhesitatingly acknowledged as gods, being so many individual souls, who on the way to the highest goal, *i. e.*, liberation, have reached a certain degree of progress, but who may sink down again from their heavenly rank to a much lower condition. According to Sāṅkhya views the recognition of popular gods has nothing to do with the question, whether there is an eternal God (*nityeśvara*), the Creator of all things. On the other hand, the second chief principle of the Sāṅkhya school, *Prakṛiti*, stands in the way of believing in an eternal God, the almighty Creator of the universe. This unconscious, primordial matter develops itself into this multifarious world of our experience in consequence of an unconscious impulse or law immanent in it, and in the interest of the inactive, ever quiescent embodied souls, so that for the creation of the universe an almighty Creator may be dispensed with. The Sāṅkhya school cannot ascribe to the Creator even the first impulse for the evolutionary movement of

primordial matter, for it finds the cause for this development in the common Indian doctrine of the law of recompense. This law, being without beginning and without end, and acting also beyond the periodically recurring dissolutions and evolutions of the universe, impels Prakṛiti to develop itself, directs its activity and thereby brings reward or punishment to the deeds of all living beings. Why this impersonal law of recompense (*karmaphala*), rather than the will of a personal God, was made the cause of creation, may be seen from the following passage of Viṣṇanabhikṣu's commentary on Sāṅkhya Sūtra, VI, 65, which may be quoted here according to Professor Garbe's translation:

From the standpoint of theism it cannot be said that the manifestation of the products (*i.e.*, the origin of the world) is caused by God, because God would then be partial (in the distribution of pleasure and pain) and cruel (because creating pain). The theists must refute this partiality (and cruelty, by teaching) that God (in the distribution of pleasure and pain) takes into consideration the works (of individual men). Now, if God directed those works, he would (again) be liable (to the reproach) of partiality (and cruelty).<sup>1</sup>

It is really difficult to say which is more surprising, the blind faith of these philosophers in the law of recompense and in transmigration, or their rather sentimental horror of all suffering, the moral value of which they could not, of course, be expected to understand.

In connection with the doctrine of transmigration there arises, according to the views of the Sāṅkhya school, another difficulty with regard to the belief in a supreme, personal God. Supposing there were such a God, they ask, would he then be an emancipated or an unemancipated soul? In the first case, he would be in a state of absolute unconsciousness, without any organs of perception, of thinking, of self-consciousness, without desire, without will; consequently he could never undertake the work of creation, which implies thought, will, and determination. If, on the other hand, God were an unemancipated soul, he would be implicated in the life of the universe,

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, p. 173 f.

he would be bound to Prakṛiti; and, being with his bodily organism himself part of the world, he would lack the power to call into existence and rule the universe. Professor Garbe justly calls this alternative sophistical. The objection easily suggests itself that God is neither an emancipated nor an unemancipated soul, but an absolutely and eternally free Spirit. As such He neither needs a material organism for the work of creation, nor can He be subject to the imperfections of the finite life of the universe. But to this the Sāṅkhya school would reply that, if such an exceptional position were allowed to God, every basis for proving His existence would be wanting. And if the existence of God cannot be proved by means of their philosophy, then — as they keep contending *ad nauseam* — His existence is impossible. They become victims to an error to which a supercilious philosophy is so dangerously liable, *viz.*, that what cannot be proved logically cannot really exist.

#### THE YOGA SŪTRAS ON THE GODHEAD.

This atheism, which is not felt as a reproach, but frankly avowed and emphatically maintained by the Sāṅkhya school, could not fail to be contradicted by the Indian mind. This contradiction appears in a most peculiar form in the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, which is the more remarkable, as the Sāṅkhya doctrine is the philosophic basis of the Yoga system, and as moreover, according to Garbe,<sup>1</sup> “the idea of a personal God in the Yoga Sūtras is something superfluous and not fitting in with the context”, and “the Sūtras speaking of God directly contradict the pre-suppositions and the purpose of the Yoga system”. The Yoga system, however, offers itself as a means of practical religion, and the latter cannot dispense with a personal God. Whereas, therefore, the original Sāṅkhya doctrine is *nirīśvaravāda* or atheism, the Yogadarśana is also called *Seśvara Sāṅkhya*, *i.e.*, the Sāṅkhya doctrine which

<sup>1</sup> *Sāṅkhya-Yoga*, p. 50.

acknowledges the existence of a personal God. Thus in the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali we read, I, 23 :

Or (concentration comes) through devotion to God (*Īśvara*).

As according to the preceding Sūtras — observe the “or” — there are yet other ways to concentration, that is, to the *summum bonum* of liberation, here the idea of a personal God appears, indeed, as something that has crept into the context by chance. In the following Sūtra this personal God is defined, in flat contradiction to the contentions of the Sāṅkhya school, as follows :

God is a separate soul (*puruṣa viśeṣa*) untouched by misery, the result of actions, or desire. *Yoga Sūtra I, 24.*

The very next Sūtra, however, raises this God far above all other souls to the throne of omniscience, and, we may perhaps add, also to the throne of omnipotence :

In him the omniscience, which in other (souls) only exists as a seed, becomes infinite. *Yoga Sūtra I, 25.*

He is also superior to the ancient, venerable teachers and to time :

He is the teacher even of (all) ancient teachers, for he is not limited by time. *Yoga Sūtra I, 26.*

And finally he is identified with the absolute Brahman, to which is also applied what is said in Yoga Sūtra I, 27 :

Its symbolical designation is the syllable Om.

Apart from the Sūtras quoted here, reference is made to *Īśvara* only in Sūtra II, 1, 45, but without adding anything else to the Yoga conception of the Godhead. It cannot be denied that, according to the sūtras quoted, the Yoga school believes in a personal God. But it is likewise beyond doubt, that, as Garbe observes, “the liberation to be aspired after by man is here understood exactly as in the Sāṅkhya philosophy, and by no means as union with God”. The function the personal God of the Yoga school has to perform is only to remove the obstacles which are in the way

of obtaining liberation, the *summum bonum*, which is not God Himself, but something outside of Him.

### THE ŚVETĀŚVATARA UPANISHAD ON THE GODHEAD.

It is with obvious reference to the Sāṅkhya doctrine that the opposition to its atheism, or—to put it in a positive form—the belief in a personal Supreme God, is stated in Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, VI, 11:

He is the only God, hidden in all beings, the superintendent of all works, who is enthroned above all beings; the witness, the perceiving one, the only one, free from the constituents (of Prakṛiti).

By means of the attribute “free”, the personally conceived Godhead is here represented as absolutely free from bondage by primordial matter and raised above the condition of ordinary souls. This is even more so in the following passage:

He creates all, he knows all, he is his own origin (*causa sui*), the knowing one, the originator of time (or, according to another reading, the abolisher of death), possessing the constituents (*guṇin*), all-knowing, the ruler of primordial matter and of the individual soul (*kshetrajña*, i.e., the individual spirit which, as living in the body, knows the field of matter), the cause of transmigration, of liberation, of existence, and of bondage. *Śvetāśvat. Up. VI, 16.*

It is remarkable that the personal God is here called *guṇin*, i.e., possessing the constituents of primordial matter. He is also called “Lord of the constituents”. Following Garbe,<sup>1</sup> we may understand this to mean that this personal God, who without connection with matter could not have consciousness, is only connected with the sublimest and noblest constituent of primordial matter, the absolutely pure Sattva. We may, however, also find the explanation of the term in the other attribute, viz., “he is the ruler of primordial matter”. Nature is at his disposal; it works at his command and under his direction. Therefore also its constituents are at his disposal, viz., *Sattva*, light and joy, *Rajas*, gloom and pain, *Tamas*, darkness, insensibility, indolence; he is their lord and ruler.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Sāṅkhya-Yoga*, p. 50.

Everything is subject to this personal God, even such things which otherwise the Indian mind would hesitate to consider as the province of a personal God, *i.e.*, transmigration, bondage, and liberation. It almost seems as if this decided theism had become somewhat doubtful to the author of this Upanishad; for in the following passage he tries to bring his conception of the Godhead nearer to the monism of the impersonal Brahman:

Desirous of liberation I go for refuge to that god who is the light of his own thoughts, who first creates Brahmā and then delivers sacred knowledge to him; who is without parts, without action, tranquil, without fault, without taint, the highest bridge to immortality, like a fire that has consumed its fuel. *Śvetāśvat. Up. VI, 18. 19.*

#### THE MAHĀBHĀRATA CONCEPTION OF THE GODHEAD.

In the Mahābhārata, whose philosophic views rest so much on the Sāṅkhya doctrine that Dahlman takes it as one of the principal documents of the Sāṅkhya school, the opposition to the atheism of the latter is also very conspicuous, although in a form which looks very much like an attempt at a compromise between the dualism of the Sāṅkhya school and the monism of the Upanishads. Of course, the Yoga school had in this anticipated the great epic poem:

The Self makes primordial matter issue forth, and also the constituents incessantly. The Self is not known to the constituents, but the Self always knows them. It is the Self that beholds the constituents and, as is meet, encompasses them. Mark the difference between the two subtle entities, primordial matter and Self: the one creates the constituents, the other does not create them. The two entities are different in nature and yet for ever closely united. *Mahābhār. XII, 248, 21. 22.*

Here we have the leading ideas of the Sāṅkhya doctrine: the Self (*ātman* or *purusha*) and primordial matter (*prakṛiti*) with its three constituents (*guṇa*). These are not created by the Self, but by primordial matter. But the Spirit causes primordial matter to issue forth. This might perhaps be interpreted according to the Sāṅkhya doctrine as meaning that



Purusha does not let primordial matter issue out of himself, but that the Self only causes it to issue out of itself, to develop itself into the universe. But the terms might also be understood to mean that the Self creates primordial matter in its undeveloped form of existence, which would in its turn, by producing the three constituents, unfold itself into the visible world. Thus the author disposes of the dualism and of the atheism of the Sāṅkhya school. The following beautiful passage, which, of course, keeps the belief in a personal God decidedly in the background, is absolutely monistic:

One fire flames in many ways, one sun is the source of heat, one wind blows through the world in many ways, one sea is the womb of the clouds. Free from the compulsion of the constituents the Self appears in all sorts of shapes; and into the Self, which is without attributes, the sages enter who know the Self. *Mahābhār. XII, 351, 10.*

#### THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ CONCEPTION OF THE GODHEAD.

In the Bhagavadgītā, according to J. Davies<sup>1</sup>, we are to distinguish five manifestations of the Godhead: (1) *Adhyātman*, the Supreme Self, the purest existence of the Godhead; (2) *Adhidaiva*, the Lord of the gods, the creator and ruler of gods and men, or of all individual souls; (3) *Jīvabhūta*, the principle of life in all living beings, and of primeval existence in inanimate matter, the imperishable (*akshara*) in all perishable things; (4) *Kshara*, the perishable, because also the perishable forms of individual existence are really only manifestations of the Supreme Being, and, like individual waves, remerge into the ocean of the Supreme Being; (5) *Adhiyajña*, the Lord of the sacrifices. The St. Petersburg Dictionary, however, finds in the latter term no designation of the Godhead, but gives "highest sacrifice" as its meaning. But even if a designation of the Godhead were intended, it would be no special manifestation of the same, but the "Lord of sacrifices" would be identical with the "Lord of the Gods". On the

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 3. 4.

whole, these manifestations of the Godhead are not different beings, but manifestations of one and the same Supreme Being, somewhat corresponding to the four conditions of the Brahman (see above p. 108 ff.). This fourfold manifestation of the Supreme Being is extolled in passages like VII, 29. 30; VIII, 3. 4. What value attaches to these individual manifestations of the Godhead, the poet says in the following passage:

Fools not knowing my higher nature, which is imperishable and than which there is nothing higher, believe me, who am invisible, to be visible. Veiled round about by the mystery of delusion, I am not visible to all. Me, who am unborn and imperishable, can this deluded world not know. *Bhagavadgītā VII, 24. 25.*

The Being which, veiled and obscured by the cosmic illusion (*māyā*), here appears visible to men's eyes, is in reality the invisible Supreme Being dwelling in all individual creatures. Thus Kṛishṇa, in whom the Supreme Being itself is manifested, says to Arjuna:

I am the father of this world, the mother, the creator, the grandsire, the syllable Om, and all knowledge, the R̥g, the Sāma, and the Yajurveda; I am the way, the sustainer, the lord, the witness, the friend, the home, the refuge, the source, the goal, the support, the receptacle and the imperishable seed. I create the heat, I make the rain to cease and I cause it to pour down; I am immortality and death, O Arjuna, I am existence and non-existence. *Bhagavadg. IX, 17—19.*

The Supreme Being is here described chiefly by means of those attributes that are ascribed to Ātman-Purusha-Brahman in the Upanishads. This deity is the cause, origin, support, and goal of all things. It is the way to liberation, to the union of the human soul with the Godhead; the creator, ruler, and witness of all things and works, for its spiritual luminousness beams upon and illuminates everything. It is the receptacle, *i.e.*, the sheath in which the eternal seed of all things lies hidden, out of which they ever and again issue forth into existence; and this seed is the Supreme Being itself, the cause of all individual creatures. Finally, it is also existence and non-existence, that which is and that which is not, *i.e.*, existence as developed into innumerable individual

creatures, and also undeveloped, pure existence out of which the former issue. This is monism pure and simple, the terms of which, however, are used by a personal manifestation of the Supreme Being to describe his own nature, and which may perhaps be interpreted in the sense of theism. This same monism with its theistic colouring appears also in the following passage:

I will declare unto thee that which is to be known, the knowledge by which immortality is obtained, the highest Brahman without beginning, which cannot be said to be existent or non-existent. On all sides it has hands and feet, on all sides heads, faces, and eyes, on all sides in the world it has ears, and thus it stands comprising the whole universe. Beaming in the component elements of all the senses, it is free from, and devoid of, all senses. Free from the world it is the support of the universe, free from the component elements (of Prakṛiti) it uses them. It is the inside and outside of all things, what is movable and immovable; it is so subtle as to be unknowable, it is far away and yet near. It is not divided in created things, and yet it dwells in them as if it were divided. It is to be known as the support of all things, which absorbs them and creates them again. It is the light of all lights, it is said to be elevated above all darkness. It is knowledge, the thing known, and the object of knowledge, having its seat in the hearts of all. *XIII, 12—18.*

However much the words of the poet may approach the terms of the Sāṅkhya doctrine, it is evident that he works up its dualism and atheism into a monism which can scarcely be called theistic. According to him, the absolute Brahman is neither existent, for that might mean the multifarious individual beings of the material universe, whereas the Brahman is one intellectual principle; neither can it be called non-existent, for that might imply the negation of its existence. The positive substance of these two negative statements lies in the fact that the Brahman is the only absolute, real, pure existence. As such it possesses neither the organs of perception nor the constituents of Prakṛiti, which are active in those organs. But its intellectual essence (*chetanā*) beams in all the activity of the constituents of Prakṛiti and the organs of perception. It is the principle of all vital movements and activities. It is too sublime, too spiritual to be seen with the ordinary eye; remote from, and alien to, the great masses, it is very near to

the wise man in his own self; it would be a mistake to think it was divided, because it works in all creatures: as an intellectual principle it is indivisible. It is the bearer or supporter of all creatures; out of it they issue at the beginning of a world-period, at the end of which they are again absorbed into it. As in the Upanishads, so also here, it is the light of all lights, an intellectual radiance, which is the act, the object, and the ultimate aim of all knowledge. The wise man finds this *summum bonum* within himself. Unfortunately this doctrine, like the Sāṅkhya and Vedānta, also makes very large concessions to the polytheism of the popular religion, so that its value becomes rather doubtful, although it avoids the harshest terms of absolute monism. At all events it forms the connecting link between Sāṅkhya and Vedānta, so that the Bhagavadgītā is claimed as an authority for both systems.

#### THE NYĀYA AND VAIŚEŚHIKA ON THE GODHEAD.

The system of the Nyāya is so much occupied with formal logic and the theory of knowledge that it cannot contribute much towards the further development of the idea of the Godhead. Its sister-school, the Vaiśeṣhika, has given more attention to the doctrine of God, but here also the results are meagre. Only a few aphorisms in the Vaiśeṣhika Sūtras of Kaṇāda are devoted to it. We quote them with the remarks of the commentators, so far as they are necessary to make the meaning intelligible: "Authoritativeness belongs to revelation, because it is a declaration of that" (Vaiśesh. Sūtra I, 1, 3).<sup>1</sup> "That" (Sanskrit, *tat*), according to the commentator, means the Supreme Being (comp. "*Tat tvam asi*"). Chhānd. Up. VI, 8, 7). Of this Supreme Being the Veda is the declaration or its revelation.

Another aphorism concerning the Supreme Being says: "But word and work are the mark of those Beings which are

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*.

distinguished from ourselves" (Vaiśesh. Sūtra 1, 2, 18). "The word 'but' implies the exclusion of the marks of touch, etc. A word is a name, a work an effect, such as the earth, etc. Both of these are a mark of the existence of God and the great sages who are more excellent than ourselves." Thus, according to the commentators, the sages of ancient times form part of the Godhead, of "those Beings, which are distinguished from ourselves", for they are supposed to possess omnipotence and omniscience.

Just one more aphorism: "Because words and works are known by perceptions to be produced" (Vaiśesh. Sūtra 1, 2, 19).

The commentator remarks that, if a father perceives his son's body, he gives him the name due to him, as Chaitra or Maitra. In the same way, every thing, for example a waterpot or a piece of cloth, gets, by the will of God, the name due to it. That word which God has destined to designate a thing is always used for that purpose, as every herb which has been touched by the tooth of the ichneumon is an antidote to the venom of a snake. From the names of things, therefore, we must conclude that there are Beings which are distinguished from ourselves and others, *i. e.*, gods and godlike ancient sages. — This is indeed a strange kind of argument, from which we can learn very little with regard to the conception of the Godhead as taught by this school. From it we can only conclude that a Supreme Being was supposed to exist, with which, however, the belief in many gods was considered to be consistent. *Adṛishta*, blind fate, which rules in the law of recompense, generally takes the place of the Godhead in this system.

### THE PŪRVA MĪMĀMSĀ ON THE GODHEAD.

Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the sister school of the Vedānta proper, is not really a philosophic system, and is of little importance for the question under discussion. Bose<sup>1</sup> designates this school as

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 283.

atheistic, following Pandit Nehemiah Nilakaṇṭha Goreh, who supports his statement by quoting a passage from an ancient, unknown work, in which the Vedic gods are declared to be myths and allegorical expressions, as a god cannot appear in embodied form. Although this does not exclude belief in a God, either monistically or theistically conceived, it yet seems to be a fact that the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā is atheistic in its creed.<sup>1</sup>

### THE VEDĀNTA CONCEPTION OF THE GODHEAD.

The Uttara Mīmāṃsā, on the other hand, brings the development of the conception of the Godhead in philosophic Hinduism to a conclusion, accepting, as it does, the speculations of the Upanishads to their full extent, pursuing them to their uttermost consequences, and enriching them with additions of its own. The Vedānta school has also learned from the Sāṅkhya and certainly from the Bhagavadgītā, and it has embodied various elements from this source into its system. The Vedānta schoolmen consider it their chief task to make the statements of the Vedas, by which they chiefly mean the Upanishads, to agree with one another, to give them a logical basis, and to state them in accurate and adequate terms.

### SACCHIDĀNANDA.

The short definition of the Brahman, which the Vedāntists give, is that it is existence, cognition, and bliss (*sacchidānanda*). Thus we read in a distich which stands at the very beginning of the Vedāntasāra:

To the Self, existent, cognition, bliss, impartite, beyond the range of speech and thought, the substrate of all, I resort for the attainment of the desired thing.

The Self is here in the first place called "impartite" or "without parts", in which the commentator finds the double

---

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya Philosophie*, p. 112, footnote 1.

meaning, that the Self, being absolutely simple, cannot consist of parts, as, for instance, a tree consists of root, trunk, branches and leaves, and that, being the only thing existent, it cannot with other things form part of a greater whole, as a tree with other trees. That it is attainable neither by language nor by thought or the inner sense, is here asserted in accordance with the teaching of the Upanishads. The important point is that it is stated to be *sacchidānanda*. In this the three principal attributes, which in the Upanishads are ascribed to the Brahman, are comprised. As regards the bliss of the Brahman, the Vedānta school says only that it is an abstract bliss without personal self-consciousness, and that it has no object, with regard to which the impersonal Brahman might rejoice or enjoy bliss. It is self-sufficient, and its bliss is principally freedom from the sufferings of transmigration or individual existence. The second attribute of "cognition" also is not the thought of a personal being, but the cognitive principle, akin to the "absolute reason" of Hegel's philosophy.

### THREE KINDS OF EXISTENCE.

With regard to the first attribute "existent", however, the Vedānta school has invented a peculiar theory of existence, in order to give a more accurate definition of the attribute of existence and to make the statements of the Upanishads concerning the Brahman agree with the facts of common experience. According to this theory, existence in the true sense of the word, in the sense of reality, belongs only to the absolute Self. Whatever else seems to exist is only apparent existence and illusion (*māyā*), the creation of ignorance (*avidyā*). The reality of the external world, however, forces itself upon practical experience with such irresistible force that it cannot be flatly denied. And in this world of outward experience we meet with the difference between mere appearance and actual existence, error and truth, illusion and reality. Even the most consistent Vedāntist must acknowledge this fact. The Vedānta school

is, therefore, obliged to distinguish a threefold existence or three degrees of existence.

1. *Prātibhāsika, Prātibhāsakī Sattā,*

*i.e.*, mere appearance or only apparent existence, is the lowest form of existence, because it exists only in imagination. To this class belongs the mirage of the desert, which shows the thirsty wanderer lakes and shady trees at a distance, and promises him water for his thirst, but vanishes altogether as he draws nearer to it. Other illustrations occur again and again in Vedānta literature: mother-of-pearl is mistaken for silver; a rope in the darkness is mistaken for a snake, the trunk of a tree for a man. This is indeed mere illusion and error, but it may have very serious consequences. He who in the darkness mistakes a rope for a snake may come to grief from sheer fright. He who mistakes a shrub or a tree for a robber may meet with the fate of the boy in Goethe's "Erl-King", who by mere imagination was frightened to death in his father's arms. Such considerations lead the Vedānta school to the assumption of a second kind of existence, called

2. *Vyāvahārika, Vyāvahārikī Sattā,*

*i.e.*, practical existence. This existence has a little more reality in it than mere illusion. To this class belong Īśvara, the highest personal god, the creator of the universe, and the other personifications of the absolute Self resembling him, the whole host of gods and demi-gods, as well as the infinite number of individual beings in the world of men; heaven and hell, transmigration with its sufferings and pains, and all the empirical existence of the external world. All these things are in reality illusion (*māyā*), products of ignorance (*avidyā*). They have neither more nor less reality than the forms and events which we see in our dreams. But they influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of man as if they possessed real existence, wherefore the Vedānta school terms them "practical or conventional existence".



### 3. *Pāramārthika, Pāramārthakī Sattā,*

true and real existence, belongs only to a third class. In this class is found only one being, the Absolute Self, the pure Brahman in its fourth state, which alone exists, and to which belong also the lost rays, the reflexes, of existence which have been scattered into the phenomena of the second class. In this way the Vedānta school tries to explain away the multifarious finite existence of the world, in favour of a pure monism, which only recognizes the absolute existence of the absolute Brahman in the fourth condition.

### LOWER AND HIGHER BRAHMA KNOWLEDGE.

But another difficulty arises for the Vedānta philosopher concerning the unity and the uniqueness of the Brahman. It is, on the one hand, a fact that the Upanishads rise occasionally to a height of speculation, for which there is only one absolute Brahman, whereas everything else must sink into the sphere of mere delusion. On the other hand, however, it cannot be denied that in the same writings the Brahman is spoken of in such terms as would suggest that it is a personal being with head and members, organs and activity, like those of human beings. One passage speaks positively of two manifestations of the Brahman:

There are two manifestations of the Brahman, a personal and an impersonal one; the personal one is unreal, the impersonal one is real. *Bṛihadār. Up. II, 3, 1; Maitrāy. Brāhm. Up. VI, 3.*

How are these two classes of Vedic sayings to be reconciled with one another? The Vedānta school solves this problem through its most celebrated representative Śāṅkara. He, in his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's Brahma Sūtras, sets forth the theory of two kinds of Brahma knowledge, a higher one (*parā brahmanavidyā*) and a lower one (*aparā brahmanavidyā*). But, in making this distinction he only follows the precedent of the Muṇḍaka Upanishad:

Two kinds of knowledge one must know—all that know the Brahman tell us so—*viz.*, the higher and the lower knowledge. The lower knowledge is the R̥gveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, Atharvaveda, phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, prosody, astronomy; the higher knowledge is that by means of which the Imperishable is understood (the Brahman). *Mund. Up. I, 1, 4, 5.*

This distinction, of course, is not quite identical with that adopted by Śankara, but it probably served him as a precedent and at the same time as a scriptural authority for his own distinction. According to Śankara the subject of the higher knowledge of the Brahman is the highest, absolute Brahman (*param brahman*), which is stated to be free from the constituents or qualities of Prakṛiti (*nirguṇam*), without distinctions (*nirviśesham*, *avikṛitam*), the foremost (*mukhyam*), and the pure (*śuddham*). The subject of the lower knowledge of the Brahman is the lower Brahman (*aparam brahman*), which possesses qualities, characteristic marks and distinctions (*saguṇam*, *sa- viśesham*), is called insignificant (*amukhyam*), and effect (*kāryam*), whereas the higher Brahman is the cause (*kāraṇam*). This distinction in some way resembles that between the exoteric and esoteric doctrine of Greek philosophy and ancient Christian gnosticism. The following passage from Śankara's commentary to the Brahma Sūtras may show how he understood it:

Are there, then, two Brahman, a higher and a lower? Certainly according to passages like the following: "Truly, O Satyakāma, that which is called the syllable Om is both the higher and the lower Brahman" (*Praśna Up. V, 2*). What, then, is the higher and what is the lower Brahman? The answer is: where the Brahman is taught in expressions like these: "not coarse (and not fine, not short and not long)" with a negation of distinctions, as name and form, etc., which indeed are only products of ignorance, there we must understand the higher Brahman. Where, however, it is taught by distinctions, such as name, form, etc., as something special, for purposes of religious worship with statements like these: "consisting of thought, the breath of life is its body, the light its manifestation" (*Chhānd. Up. III, 14, 2*), there we must understand the lower Brahman. But is there not, in this way, violence done to the Vedic saying: "(One only) without a second" (*Chhānd. Up. VI, 2, 1*)? By no means. This objection becomes untenable, as the attributes (*upādhi*), such as name and form, are only products of ignorance. To this religious worship of the Brahman accrues a fruit, which may be termed "the glory of the world", and which belongs to the sphere of transmigration, as is written in a place quite close to it: "If he desires the world of the fathers" (*Chhānd. Up. VIII, 2, 1*).

For, in this stage, ignorance has not yet disappeared. *Brahma Sūtra IV, 3, 14.* Commentary.<sup>1</sup>

Śankara, therefore, believes he is justified in distinguishing, according to the Upanishads, two Brahman, the higher, absolute Brahman, the subject of knowledge for the initiated sage, and the lower, personal Brahman, the object of religious worship for the great mass of the uninitiated. But this latter Brahman, to which qualities and restrictive attributes (*upādhi*) belong, is the product of ignorance, a conception without reality and truth. It belongs to the sphere of *māyā*, illusion. For the really enlightened sage there is only one Brahman: "One only without a second." The Vedānta schoolmen are indefatigable in adducing ever fresh illustrations to inculcate this doctrine, which they believe to be so all-important. Śankara himself quotes the following two distichs, which contain such illustrations:

As this shining form, the one sun, is severally reflected in different waters, so the unborn Self, the embodied God, becomes multiform through false attributes.

"The God embodied", "the unborn Self" is nothing but the supreme, absolute Brahman. By means of false attributes and vestures it appears multiform in the innumerable individual souls that dwell in bodies. They, however, possess no more reality than the images of the sun reflected in different pools of water or in several pots filled with water. The real sun is always only one. Thus in the following distich:

The soul of creatures is in truth but one,  
but it stands separate in every creature;  
Simple it is, and yet, forsooth, we see it  
in many forms, as the moon's disk in water.

According to Deussen<sup>2</sup>, Śankara does not apply the term Sacchidānanda, existence-thought-bliss, to the highest attributeless Brahman. But in the poem *Ātmabodha*, which is

<sup>1</sup> Compare Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 228.

likewise ascribed to Śāṅkara, the term is applied to the highest, attributeless Brahman exactly as in the Vedāntasāra:

Whatever may be seen and known by hearing  
it can be nothing else but only Brahman;  
It is the Brahman, in the light of wisdom,  
existence, thought, and bliss, without a second.

*Ātmabodha 63.*

In the commentary on the Brahma Sūtras, Śāṅkara also unhesitatingly acknowledges these three attributes of the Brahman, and declares that bliss means simply the absence of suffering, wherefore it is only a negative attribute. Existence and thought, therefore, are the only positive attributes of the absolute Brahman. For this Śāṅkara quotes Bṛihadār. Up. iv, 5, 13:

As a piece of salt consists solely and wholly of one mass of salt-taste, without any difference between outside and inside, even so, in truth, this Self consists solely and wholly of one mass of knowledge, without difference between inside and outside.

### ABSOLUTE MONISM.

But even two attributes are inconsistent with absolute monism. Śāṅkara, therefore, knows how to reduce them to one, by explaining that to exist and to think are really one and the same thing. For (1) the Brahman cannot be existence without cognition, because this would contradict the passage from scripture quoted above, and because the Brahman, then, would not be the Self of the individual soul, which is of a cognitive nature; (2) nor can the Brahman be cognition without existence, because that is impossible, *i. e.*, cognition includes existence; (3) Brahman cannot be existence and cognition, each separately, because that would imply a multiplicity, which is impossible in the Brahman; (4) therefore we can only assume that existence is equal to cognition, and cognition equal to existence (*sattā eva bodho bodha eva cha sattā*), so that the one does not exclude but include the other.<sup>1</sup> Of course, these

---

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Deussen, *ibid.* p. 229.

are not proofs, but assertions which need to be proved. One point is self-evident, *i. e.*, that cognition implies or presupposes existence; but existence does not logically imply cognition. If, therefore, it were said that the Brahman was cognition, that would also mean that it exists. But here existence (*sat*) is the principal attribute, which does not imply that the pure existence of the Brahman is necessarily also cognition.

### THE BRAHMAN UNKNOWABLE.

We may, however, here ask how it is possible to know an entity which is supposed to continue in the exalted tranquillity of absolute isolation and yet to be at the same time identical with the knowing subject in the sage and in the individual soul in general. The Vedāntists of Śāṅkara's school frankly allow the unknowableness of the Brahman by terming it the "indistinct" or "unrevealed (*avyakta*)", and by acknowledging the difficulty that the Brahman is to be the knowing subject of knowledge (*cheta*), or the passive spectator (*sākshi*) of all perception, and that for this reason it cannot, at the same time, be the object of knowledge. The difficulty is increased, if we remember that we are here concerned with an impersonal subject lacking self-consciousness. The Vedāntists themselves have declared it to be inadmissible to distinguish in the Brahman between the knowing subject, the act of knowing, and the knowledge known. Thus in *Ātmabodha*, 40:

There is no difference in the Supreme Spirit  
of knower, knowledge, and object of knowledge;  
Of thought and bliss it is a single being,  
and solitary beams in its own radiance.

Individual self-consciousness, with which all human knowledge is bound up, by no means leads us to an absolute unity, but distinguishes the knowing subject continually and peremptorily from other subjects besides ourselves, and likewise from all kinds of objects outside of ourselves, and thus continually leads us only to a plurality of individual beings. Moreover, that individual

self-consciousness, from which human thought and knowledge is inseparable, belongs itself to that plurality which, according to the Vedānta, belongs to the sphere of illusion. How then, according to Vedānta principles, are we to have confidence in the correctness and truth of our own cognition and of the assertions of the Vedāntists? They deny that there is in the Brahman that which we call self-consciousness. What remains in the individual Self, after divesting it of individual self-consciousness, is supposed to be the essence of the absolute Self. But what is that which remains? That can neither be comprehended in thought nor stated in words. An impersonal, unconscious spirit we do not know. We know of spiritual existence only in connection with self-conscious persons. With the negation of self-consciousness thought and knowledge are at an end. There could only remain pure, unconscious, unthinking, unknowing existence, which is as much like inanimate matter as two peas resemble each other. In reality there remains something thought, something imagined. In other words, the unconscious Self, the highest Brahman, is nothing but an unreal abstraction.

#### THE BRAHMAN KNOWABLE BY SAMYAGDARŚANA?

The sophisms of the Vedāntists, however prolix they may be, do not remove these difficulties, which on closer examination must become fatal to the conception of the Godhead that is peculiar to the Vedānta. The Vedāntists themselves feel this, and they think they know a way out of the difficulty. By mystical introspection (*samyagdarśana*) the *yogi*, i.e., the ascetic united with the Brahman, conceives the essence of the Brahman. What is not attainable by means of theoretical reflection must be gained in the practical way of ascetic austerities and abstract meditation. Through this, according to Śankara, the ascetic, who is here identical with the sage, accomplishes that absorption (*pranidhāna*) by means of which

he comes to discern the Godhead. As a scriptural authority for this expedient Śāṅkara refers to Kaṭha Up. iv, 1 :

The Self-existing towards without made openings,  
the Self, therefore, looks outward and not inward :  
Desirous of immortal bliss a wise man  
beholds the inner Self by introspection.

The Self-existent is here the Brahman in the form of Īśvara, the Creator. The openings which he made are the organs of the senses, on which man depends for the knowledge of the world. Through them the Self looks outward. But he who wants to obtain true knowledge of the Supreme Brahman must direct his desire to this immortal Being and turn his attention in the opposite direction for introspection. Absorbed in the consideration of his own Self and continually realising that his own Self is at the same time the absolute Self, the highest Brahman, he will find within himself union with the Brahman, with which, however, distinctive, discursive, critical cognition has nothing to do. The result is beautifully described, from a Vedānta point of view, in a distich of Ātmabodha (66):

When on the inner sky the Self arises,  
the sun of wisdom, that dispels all darkness,  
Then, all-pervading, and all things sustaining,  
it sheds through all the universe its splendour.

But against this practical method of discerning the Brahman a fatal objection arises from the very standpoint of Vedāntism. Such devout meditation, and the ascetic exercises connected with it, belong to the sphere of practical existence, which has no reality and, therefore, cannot produce an effect so real as the knowledge of the Brahman in its pure essence, and union with the same. How can means belonging to the sphere of the illusive products of ignorance effect the attainment of the highest knowledge and the highest reality? If the former are part of *māyā*, will not also their supposed effect come within the sphere of unreality and illusion?

Moreover, Śāṅkara assumes that the pious sage gains the knowledge of the Brahman through union with it. According

to Vedānta views, however, real union with the Brahman cannot be effected until after death, the dissolution of the delusive vestures of the true Self. Till then union with the Brahman is only a union in knowledge, *i. e.*, the knowledge of being in reality identical with the absolute Self. Real union is a consequence of this knowledge, and this knowledge cannot, therefore, be attained by that union. Śankara is here caught in his own trap. From the principles of the Vedānta itself it follows that the Supreme Being of philosophic Brāhmanism, the absolute Brahman, is inaccessible to all human knowledge. What Śankara asserts with regard to intuitive knowledge or introspection is a fatal jump in the direction of practical existence, to which he cannot concede reality. Thus Vedānta monism can only end in frankly renouncing all knowledge of God, in complete agnosticism. In strict adherence to Vedānta principles, it is absolutely impossible to know whether there is an absolute Brahman or not. If it should really exist, no straight and no crooked way would lead to its knowledge.

#### KNOWLEDGE OF THE BRAHMAN UNPROFITABLE.

But we must go a step farther. If it were possible not to imagine the absolute Brahman, but to comprehend it in its absolute, real existence, what would be the use of knowing such a Supreme Being which is divested of all personal self-consciousness and of all moral attributes? No prayers can be addressed to it; no man in the distress of his soul could obtain sympathy and consolation from it; no help in the emergencies of our daily life could be expected from it. Feelings like pity and mercy are as foreign to the Brahman as active interference in favour of its devotees. Nor can the Brahman hear and answer prayers in its lofty, serene tranquillity. To those who know, it sounds like mockery, when modern Hindus at the close of their tracts and leaflets exclaim: "May Parabrahman bless you all!" The Brahman cannot bless. Apart from the action of individual souls, all action of the Brahman is expressly



and emphatically denied in the most important Vedānta documents. Worship and prayer belong to the sphere of the lower, personal Brahman, which both the Upanishads and Śāṅkara declare to be unreal and untrue (*asatya*). Of course, if the Vedānta doctrine concerning the Brahman were true, all the afflictions of the soul and all the sufferings of the body would be nothing but illusion. But are they therefore less real, less painful to the sufferer? Truly, in the present-day life of the Indian people, misery and suffering are such gigantic realities that even the most consistent Vedāntist cannot but admit their existence. What help, with regard to them, can come from the Supreme Brahman, which cannot, without sinking into the sphere of illusion, descend from its abstract height into practical life? What help can come from the lower Brahman, which belongs to the sphere of mere illusion? Indeed, the polytheism of the Vedic hymns, which the people at least believed with sincerity, but which, of course, for the Vedāntist falls within the sphere of illusion, was a much better comfort than the monistic belief in Parabrahman, which besides stands in need of having its nakedness covered by the dualist distinction between a higher and a lower Brahman. The Vedānta conception of the Godhead therefore affords no satisfaction whatever to the wants of practical religion.

Nor is it much better with regard to morality. To the impersonal Brahman, the blameless, pure, righteous, charitable man is no more acceptable than the murderer, the thief, the adulterer, the impostor. To the former it offers no support, no motive for doing good; to the latter it infuses no fear and horror of sin. Moral effects cannot proceed from impersonal, pure existence and cognition. In the sinner it cannot work repentance of his evil deeds, nor can it give forgiveness and strength for reformation to the repentant. From the standpoint of the higher Brahman knowledge, there is neither virtue nor vice, neither sin nor holiness of life. As a matter of fact, in India men may be seen morally depraved, grown old and gray in vice, who unhesitatingly assert: "I am God, I am Brahman." Thus

the Vedānta conception of the Godhead proves a moral failure in its theoretical consequences as well as in its practical fruits.

Nevertheless, the attempt made by Schopenhauer, and after him by educated Hindus, to give morality a firm foundation by means of Vedānta principles, deserves our attention. "The absolute Self—the principle of all mental life—in every individual man"—this seems to be a sufficient basis for the construction of a system of altruistic ethics. For he who recognises in the innermost self of his neighbour the same Being which lives within his own self, can on no account hate or harm his neighbour, but must needs love him as himself. Such, briefly, are the outlines of this doctrine. And it is well known that it still has its adherents in that part of Western society which continues under the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Many of those and many educated Hindus find in this idea the closest relation between Vedāntism and Christianity. Of course, *we* are obliged to consider this a mistake. But we should rejoice, if in this way those, who do not share our Christian faith, would be induced to reduce to practice the Christian maxim: "Love thy neighbour as thyself!" We shall not go out of our way to show that unfortunately the practical results of this doctrine have as yet proved very meagre, both in Europe and in India. For this would not be sufficient for a decisive verdict as to its truth or untruth.

But it seems to us that just in this attempt at constructing a system of altruistic ethics the inconsistency of Vedāntist monism becomes evident. If the absolute Self were the metaphysical basis of all individual Selves, so that the former must be recognised in each of the latter, no individual Self could ever come into moral antagonism with another individual Self. The manifestations of selfishness in individual men, such as hatred and revenge, envy and jealousy, which not only harm a fellowman, but often lead to his economical, moral, and even physical ruin, would be not only inconceivable, but

absolutely impossible. The absolute Self, from which the impulses for the actions of all individual Selves ultimately issue, could not thus turn its sword against itself. And according to the Vedānta the absolute Self is the metaphysical basis of the individual Self, not only in the pious sage, who knows this and may also act according to altruistic principles, but also in the uninitiated, whose knowledge and actions do not rank so high. In other words, if this Vedānta foundation of an altruistic system of ethics were really true, altruistic ethics would result not so much as an obligation, but with absolute necessity as a natural product in all individual men. There would then be no need of a philosophic foundation of ethics. But it is evident to all that such is unfortunately not the case.

It would avail nothing to say that these deplorable manifestations of selfishness belong to the sphere of *māyā*, for the attempt to construct an altruistic system of ethics on a Vedānta basis would also fall within this sphere of illusion. If this cosmic illusion is appealed to, all attempts at giving a metaphysical basis to morality must be given up once for all. For then also our moral and immoral actions together with the difference between good and evil are absolutely illusory and insignificant. And we must add that such philosophic resignation is the only legitimate result of the Vedānta doctrine. From a historical point of view, Vedāntism has as yet accomplished nothing that might be compared with the great works accomplished by Christian faith and love. Popular tradition ascribes to Śankarāchārya, the most celebrated teacher of Vedāntism, the introduction of various abuses in Malabar, especially the introduction of caste distinctions, by which the greater part of the population was degraded to an existence quite unworthy of man. And it has never yet occurred to any one of our modern Vedāntists to do anything towards the uplifting of those depressed classes. Nor may we in future expect anything from this belief in the absolute Brahman towards the improvement of the social life and the regeneration of the Indian people.

## BHAKTI REACTION AGAINST MONISM.

It is therefore not surprising that in the course of time and based on the Veda itself, reactions against this pantheistic conception of the Godhead should have frequently arisen. They have their representatives chiefly among the leaders of the different sects of Vishṇu-worshippers (*Vaiṣṇava*), that is, in the spheres of popular religion. The religion of these sects is pre-eminently *bhakti*, *i. e.*, devotion to the God Vishṇu. They seek a philosophical basis for their religion in a kind of dualism (*dvaita*) or in a modified monism (*viśiṣṭādvaita*). On this basis they avow the personality of the Supreme Being and concede a more or less independent existence to the individual soul. Their views are similar to that conception of the Godhead which we found in the modified Sāṅkhya-Yoga of the Mahābhārata and Bhagavadgītā. As they are avowedly based on the Upanishads, they are also frequently called Vedānta.<sup>1</sup>

## RĀMĀNUJA'S TEACHING.

Thus Rāmānuja, one of them, taught that there were three eternal principles (*tattva*): (1) Īśvara, the highest personally conceived deity, according to the Vedānta school the first personification of the impersonal Brahman. (2) Chit, the individual soul, properly "consciousness", or "cognition". (3) Achit, *i. e.*, unconscious existence, the material world. "Dualism" therefore is scarcely a correct designation of this doctrine, unless Chit and Achit are comprised under one head, as creatures and opposites of Īśvara. As an authority for this dvaita doctrine Rāmānuja adduces the beautiful passage in Muṇḍ. Up. III, 1, 1-3:

Two lovely birds, united in close friendship,  
 sit on one tree, embracing one another :  
 While one of them enjoys the tree's sweet berry,  
 the other, looking on, abstains from eating.  
 The Self on the same tree is sore afflicted,  
 and plunged in impotence, and blindness-stricken :

<sup>1</sup> Compare, Monier Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India*, pp. 116-179.

If he beholds his mate, the kindly ruler,  
 and his great might, he will be free from suffering.  
 When he, the witness, sees the golden Maker,  
 the Self, the Lord, the origin of Brahmā,  
 Then, knowing, he throws off both vice and virtue,  
 and, stainless, he obtains supreme perfection.

According to the Vedānta views of Śāṅkara's school, the two "beautifully winged birds" are the absolute and the individual Self, which in reality are identical. But Rāmānuja understands them as meaning the personal God Viṣṇu and the human soul. We must, of course, acknowledge that the former interpretation is more in accordance with the meaning intended by the author than that of Rāmānuja: as two birds on one tree, so the absolute and the individual Self dwell together in one body. As long as the absolute Self is not known, the individual Self remains plunged in impotence and delusion. But by the knowledge of the higher Self, which indeed appears here in its first personification as Lord and Creator, the individual Self "obtains supreme perfection", *i. e.*, union with the absolute Self. It must, however, be admitted that the words also admit of Rāmānuja's interpretation. He aims at a complete union of the pious man with Viṣṇu, and he tries thereby to do justice to the requirements of practical religion. We may gather Rāmānuja's conception of the Supreme Being from the following passage adapted by Monier Williams from Dr. K. M. Banerjea's *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy* where Rāmānuja is made to say:

All the Śāstras tell us of two principles—knowledge and ignorance, virtue and vice, truth and falsehood. Thus we see pairs everywhere, and God and the human soul are also so. How can they be one? I am sometimes happy, sometimes miserable; He, the Spirit, is always happy. Such is the discrimination. How, then, can two distinct substances be identical? He is an eternal Light—without anything to obscure it—pure, the one superintendent of the world. But the human soul is not so. Thus a thunderbolt falls on the tree of no-distinction. How canst thou, oh slow of thought, say, "I am He, who has established this immense sphere of the universe in its fulness?" Consider thine own capacities with a candid mind. By the mercy of the Most High a little understanding has been committed to thee. It is not for thee, therefore, O perverse one, to say, I am God.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Monier Williams, *ibid* p. 121.

It will be admitted that the logical inconsistencies of Vedānta monism and its incompatibility with practical religion are here exposed with unsparing criticism, "thunderbolts" indeed, that are fatal to the tree of monism.

#### UDAYANĀCHĀRYA'S TEACHING.

Other great teachers like Rāmānuja flourished in India from time to time:—Madhva at Udipi on the Western Coast about the year 1200, Vallabha in Central India about 1480, and a little later Chaitanya in the North. Their teachings on the whole agree with that of Rāmānuja and have their root in practical religion, which can never be satisfied with an impersonal Supreme Being like that of Vedānta monism. This sentiment finds expression in a particularly striking way in a work of the Nyāya school, called *Kusumāñjali* (bunch of flowers),<sup>1</sup> whose author Udayanāchārya may have been a contemporary of Madhva. The author tries to prove, after the method of the Nyāya school, in truly Indian fashion, that there is a personal Supreme Being. This belief in a personal God appears at the very beginning of his work (I, 2):

The Being whose worship the wise consider as the means of the two heaven-like liberations,—He, the Supreme Soul, is here ascertained (as the object of our contemplation).<sup>2</sup>

In I, 3 the author calls this Supreme Being Śiva, but only in order to state that from a certain quarter doubts are raised against his existence, which find expression in five objections against faith in God: (1) There is no supernatural cause [such as *adrishṭa* = fate] of another world; (2) [supposing God to be non-existent] we may use other means [as sacrifices] to gain the future world; (3) there are proofs to show the non-existence of God; (4) even supposing that God does exist, he cannot be a cause of true knowledge to us; (5) there is no argument to prove the existence of God.

<sup>1</sup> Edited and translated by E. B. Cowell, Calcutta, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Cowell, *ibid.* p. 2.

We see that the objections against faith in God are partly of a specifically Indian colouring, to which no general significance attaches; for if outside of India any one does not believe in God, he does not care for a future world either. The last three objections, however, might have been taken from the atheistic literature of our own time, which, of course, does not make them more conclusive. That the existence of God cannot, after the ordinary methods of philosophy and science, be proved beyond all doubt, is as undeniable as the other fact, that atheism is likewise a belief, for which there is no proof whatever, either scientific or unscientific. Of course, belief in a personal God, which is obtained in quite a different way, is capable of being vindicated with good reasons, even before the tribunal of science and philosophy, but the author of *Kusumāñjali* does not, even in the heavy armour of *Nyāya* logics and dialectics, succeed in proving the existence of a personal God to his antagonists. His whole argument is important only as a witness for the belief in a personal God, so as to satisfy the requirements of practical religion. The details of the author's arguments are of no general interest. But the closing verses (v. 17. 18), in which the author sums up the substance of his work and expresses his faith in God, claim our sympathetic attention:

Iron-souled are they in whose heart Thou canst find no place, though thus washed by the repeated inundations of ethics and Vedic texts; yet still in time, oh merciful One, Thou in thy goodness canst even save those who oppose our proposition, and make them undoubting in their conviction of Thy existence.— But as for us, oh Thou essentially Fair, though our minds have been long plunged in Thee, the ocean of joy, yet are they verily restless still and unsatisfied; therefore, oh Lord, hasten to display Thy mercy, that our minds fixed only on Thee, we may no more be subject to Yama's continual inflictions.<sup>1</sup>

However much we may justify these teachers in their opposition to the monism of the *Vedānta*, we must yet frankly acknowledge that they are wrong in appealing to the *Upanishads* where the beginnings of this monism are doubtless to be found. It is also to be regretted that most of these theistic teachers

---

<sup>1</sup> Cowell, *ibid.* p. 85.

have, with the unity of the Brahman, also given up the unity and the spiritual nature of God, and thus followed the track of popular polytheism. With regard to this it is remarkable that Rāmānuja said the Supreme Being was present among its worshippers in five different ways: (1) in images, *i. e.*, in the well-known Indian idols; (2) in a partial incarnation of its nature, such as Rāma, the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa; (3) in the full manifestation of its nature, such as Kṛishṇa in the Bhagavadgītā; (4) in the subtle, all-pervading Spirit, *i. e.*, in the absolute Self; (5) in the internal Spirit controlling the human soul. In this way Rāmānuja knows how to reconcile the idolatry of popular religion with the monistic philosophy of the Vedānta. With this compromise the theistic movement brought about by Rāmānuja was doomed; it was absorbed in the compact mass of polytheistic Hinduism.

Another movement akin to the former, the *Brahma-samāj* of the nineteenth century, will probably meet with the same fate. Its originator, Rām Mohan Roy, and his greater successor, Keshab Chander Sen, renewed the attempt to interpret the Upanishads in the light of an ethical theism, which, of course, they had borrowed from Christianity. In the person of Keshab Chander Sen, however, this attempt was finally lost in an intoxicating mysticism, whose ultimate results can scarcely be distinguished from the pantheism of the Vedānta. His successor Mozumdār also wished to modify the Christian faith in God so as to approximate it to a truly Indian mystic monism.

#### SWĀMI VIVEKĀNANDA'S TEACHING.

It might be expected that with the monism of Śankara's school, with the atheism and dualism of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, with the theistically modified Vedānta of Rāmānuja and Udayanāchārya, the possibilities of a philosophic doctrine of God as based on the Upanishads would be exhausted. In our days, however, Swāmi Vivekānanda, with the authority of an ancient Rishi, claims to set forth a new conception of God, uniting in itself the different views of all the former schools.



These are his own words: "It is foolish to try and show that the whole of the Vedas is dualistic. It is just as foolish to try and show that the whole of the Vedas is non-dualistic. They are both dualist and non-dualist. We can understand that better now in the light of modern ideas. These are only different views which lead to the same final result. And these views are necessary for the development of the human mind, wherefore they are preached by the Vedas. In merciful condescension to the human race the Vedas show us the different steps to the higher aim."<sup>1</sup>

It is not quite clear, who is here supposed to have condescended to human weakness, the Vedas or the absolute Brahman, which, of course, cannot descend from its abstract height. But if it could, how would it agree with the truth ascribed to it, that it is supposed to have led men through the polytheism of the Vedic hymns, through the theosophic mysticism of the Upanishads, to the atheistic dualism of the Sāṅkhya school, to the monistic pantheism of Śāṅkara, and to the theistically modified monism of Rāmānuja and kindred teachers? We can well understand that the Swāmi had great difficulty in finding suitable terms to express this impossible thing in an intelligible form:

I do not know whether I am able to express it or not; but it is my desire, the task of my life, to prove that the schools of Vedānta (*advaita*, *dvaita*, *viśiṣṭādvaita*) do not contradict each other, but that they mutually demand and complete each other. One forms, as it were, the stepping-stone to the next till the goal of the *advaita*, the *tat tvam asi* (thou art the Brahman) is reached.<sup>2</sup>

There is indeed nothing new in this. This latest discovery of the Swāmi is repeated by Śāṅkara in his works over and over again. Apart from this, Swāmi Vivekānanda preaches nothing but the old monism, which we have studied in Śāṅkara's school:

There is no I and no thou: all is one. Either all is I, or all is thou. The idea of duality is all wrong, and the whole universe is the result of this false knowledge.<sup>3</sup> The outcome of the Vedānta doctrine, therefore, is that thou

<sup>1</sup> From *Colombo to Almora*, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Brahmavādin*, p. 310.

and I are in the universe the Absolute, not parts of it, but the whole. Thou art the whole of that Absolute, and so it is with all other things. For the idea of a part has no room in it.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, and how, according to the Swāmi, is this Absolute, which every one of us has the honour to be? His answer is:

Where there are no qualities, no qualifying word can serve as an illustration. And the advaitist would ascribe to it (the Brahman) no other attributes but these three: *sachchidānanda*. i. e., existence, thought, and bliss. That is what Śankara did. But in the Upanishads themselves we find that they go much farther and that they say, nothing can be said of it, but '*neti, neti*,' not so, not so.<sup>2</sup>

These declarations of the Swāmi prove at least that, also according to the views of modern Hindus, we have correctly interpreted the conception of the Godhead as found in the Upanishads and the Vedānta school. This implies that the Swāmi's teaching is open to the same critical objections which we have been obliged to raise against Śankara's doctrine.

#### ELEMENTS OF TRUTH IN HINDU PHILOSOPHY.

But now the question will arise, whether we can recognise any element of truth in the conceptions of the Supreme Being which are found in the Vedic hymns, in the Upanishads, and in other documents of philosophic Hinduism. We have no intention to answer this question in the negative. In opposition to the many gods of the Vedic hymns, a great, important, eternal truth had dawned upon the sages of the Upanishads, *viz.*, the knowledge that the Supreme Being can be only one. We understand their enthusiasm and joy at this discovery; we also understand the zeal with which the philosophers of the Vedānta tried to secure the possession of this treasure. The discovery, we may perhaps say, the re-discovery of such an eternal truth, is always a high pleasure, a real triumph to the human heart and mind. But in their triumphant joy they forgot another truth, no less important and valuable, which

<sup>1</sup> *Brahmavādīn* II, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *From Colombo to Almora*, p. 256.

had existed in the religious consciousness of their forefathers, viz., the truth, that the divine Being is a self-conscious personality after whose image the human personality was created. The Vedic poets were in possession of this very valuable spark of divine light. Perhaps they felt and believed rather than distinctly recognised that the Supreme Being might be approached with prayers and was kindly and graciously disposed towards men, and that he was the judge and avenger of human sin and guilt, the superintendent and protector of inviolable laws, which man may not infringe with impunity.

We are inclined to regard the belief that God is a self-conscious, personal Being as valuable as, nay, even more valuable than, the belief in the unity of the Supreme Being. The conception of the unity of the Godhead is, indeed, the adequate, correct form of religious belief; but it is only a form which must be filled with a satisfactory substance. The poets of the Vedic hymns had broken the form, but they had preserved at least part of the valuable substance. The sages of the Upanishads and the philosophers of the Vedānta did, indeed, find the proper form and tried to mould it into an adequate shape. But in doing so they lost nearly all of the valuable substance. Or rather, in order to preserve the form they thought it right to sacrifice the substance, *i. e.*, the personality of God. By critically abolishing the deities of the Vedic hymns or relegating them into the sphere of mere illusion, they believed they were preserving the kernel of religion in the idea of the Brahman. In reality the kernel was lost, and what they kept was an empty husk. We Christians, and with us all those who feel and recognise the absolute value and the overwhelming power of moral law, must confess that the hymns to Varuṇa, in which human knowledge of sin and the prayer for forgiveness are so pathetically and beautifully expressed, appeal much more to our hearts than the "great words" of the Vedānta school: *Tat tvam asi — Ekam evādvītiyam — Aham brahmāsmi.*

If we could recognise a divine Being in the absolute Brahman of the Vedānta, we should feel obliged to declare these "great words" to be down-right blasphemy. And on the lips of those who pronounce them with so much self-satisfaction, they are really blasphemous. In reality, however, the Brahman is a mere abstraction. For spiritual and ethical purposes an impersonal god is not much better than no god at all, it is a dead, man-made idol. Fortunately, we may say, the Brahman of Vedānta monism is much too sublime to be comprehended by ordinary men. The writer has often asked men from among the common people what the highest Brahman was, and the answer invariably was: "The highest Brahman is wind!" It may be objected that this is due to the ignorance of the uneducated classes. To those classes, at any rate, the Supreme Being of the Vedānta is of no account.

But it is the same with the educated classes. What artificial and forced arguments must be employed, if a man wants to persuade himself that he is identical with the Brahman! And how absolutely futile is this effort after all! No one, not even Swāmi Vivekānanda and his applauding audiences, can honestly believe that he is Brahman. In our days of staunch realism, not even the young men of India will, for any length of time, be persuaded that the actual facts of the world and of life are nothing but illusion, and that nothing really exists but the Brahman as identified with the human Self. The forced artificiality of this doctrine, which, from whatever side it may be approached, contains the most glaring contradictions, is in itself a sufficient proof of its untenability. The most important criterion of divine truth is always its simplicity, by which — and this is another token of its divine origin — it is rendered accessible and effective for the highly educated mind of the scholar as well as for the receptive heart of the poorest child.

## II. The Christian Conception of God.

### 1. THE UNITY OF GOD.

The Christian conception of God bears the seal of divine simplicity. We Christians believe in God, because He has revealed himself to us in His word, as it is contained in the Old and New Testaments, and by His Spirit who quickens this word in our hearts. We confess that without this divine revelation we should be far away from God and He would be unknowable to us. But the Bible is the document in which God's revelation is offered to us, as it has been accomplished in a long series of historical facts and finally in the person of Jesus Christ.

#### GOD'S REVELATION TO ABRAHAM.

In this revelation the great truth is emphasized, which once also dawned on the Indian mind, *viz.*, that God is One. When this truth became known through God's self-revelation, it was to the human race something new, something which they did not know or had ceased to know. Abraham, whom Christians, Jews, and Muhammadans revere as the father of the faithful, although probably himself already a worshipper of the one true God, was called by God away from a family and people who believed in many gods and worshipped idols. And he was chosen to become the bearer of this great truth, the ancestor of a community among which it was to be cherished and preserved: "The Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless

them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. XII, 1—3). It is here not yet explicitly stated that God is one; but it was implied, and Abraham understood it. For if the God who revealed Himself to him, had the power to bless Abraham's friends and to destroy his enemies, nay, to communicate the blessing conferred upon him to all the nations of the earth, no further words were needed to declare the fact that this God was the God of the whole world and therefore only one. Afterwards Abraham received the following revelation: "I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. XVII, 1). The Almighty God excludes other gods beside Him, with whom, otherwise, He would have to share His omnipotence. Thus at a time, when the ancient Āryans worshipped a number of gods, when all around in Accadia and Assyria, in Media and Persia, in Phœnicia and Egypt, in Asia Minor and Greece, polytheism was prevalent, the knowledge of the living and true God was given to the patriarch Abraham, and it was vouchsafed to him through a revelation of God Himself.

### HENOTHEISM ?

We are well aware of the objections of higher criticism, which tries to prove that the God of Abraham was only the God of a particular tribe, in addition to whom Abraham is supposed to have acknowledged other gods for other tribes, in other words that his religious belief was henotheism. But in the passages quoted, which are the only records that give us information of Abraham's knowledge of God, we find not a vestige of polytheistic ideas; on the contrary, they show Abraham's religious belief in one God with the greatest clearness and distinctness. If there were any henotheistic ideas connected with his faith, they were doomed to fade away before the light of that divine revelation which he had received. We find historical confirmation of this in the fact that the fixed, solemn designation of the true God throughout the

Old Testament is: "The God of my fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Max Müller, whom we may certainly credit with a critical insight into the facts of the history of religions, frankly acknowledges that Abraham had not only a consciousness of God, like the peoples among whom he lived, but that he possessed the knowledge of the One God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, and that he owed it to the self-revelation of God: "If we are asked how this one Abraham possessed not only the primitive intuition of God as He had revealed Himself to all mankind, but passed through the denial of all other gods to the knowledge of the one God, we are content to answer that it was by a special Divine Revelation. We do not indulge in theological phraseology, but we mean every word to its fullest extent. The Father of Truth chooses His own prophets, and He speaks to them in a voice stronger than the voice of thunder. . . . A 'divine instinct' may sound more scientific, and less theological; but in truth it would neither be an appropriate name for what is a gift or grace accorded to but few, nor would it be a more scientific, *i.e.*, a more intelligible word than 'special revelation'." <sup>1</sup>

#### GOD'S REVELATION TO ISRAEL.

When the descendants of Abraham had become a numerous people in Egypt, but were at the same time in danger of losing the knowledge of the true God under the influence of Egyptian nature-worship, that knowledge was renewed and further developed through the divine mission of Moses. "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—thus the divine voice came to Moses out of the fiery bush at Horeb (Exod. iii, 1—6). And the first commandment of the decalogue, which briefly sums up the divine message of Moses to the people of Israel, is: "I am the Lord, thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exod. xx, 2. 3). And in another passage it is

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, p. 373.

impressed upon the people: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord, our God, is one Lord" (Deut. vi, 4). We are well aware that higher criticism denies that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, but the decalogue is to be found in the so-called "Books of the Covenant" (Exod. xix—xxiii), which is acknowledged even by the most radical criticism as the most ancient part of the Pentateuch. Careful scholars, who are moderate critics themselves, acknowledge that the "Book of the Covenant" is a document of the time of Moses, as in Exod. xxiv, 4, 7, it is stated that Moses himself wrote down these laws. However this may be, historical criticism, though very advanced, must admit that Moses accomplished a reformation of the shattered national consciousness of Abraham's descendants and that he led them out of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> But this was impossible without a reformation of their religious belief, which was in danger of losing its most precious inheritance from the times of Abraham, *viz.*, without the knowledge of the true God. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it is a fact imprinted for ever on the consciousness of Israel that God revealed Himself to the people anew through Moses, and that through Moses He renewed the covenant made with their fathers and led the people out of Egypt. From Joshua to the times of the exile this is the unanimous testimony of the Historical Books, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

#### OLD TESTAMENT MONOTHEISM NO NATURAL GROWTH.

But however distinctly the messengers of God in Israel might proclaim in a hundred voices the great truth that Jehovah alone was the true God, the God of Israel, they all had sufficient cause for the bitter complaint, "Who hath believed our report?" Even at the time of Moses, and through the whole history down to the exile, the great mass of the people always succumbed to the temptation to serve other gods, *i. e.*, to the temptation of sliding back into the polytheistic idol-

---

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Giesebrecht, *Die Geschichtlichkeit des SinaiBundes* (1900); Rothstein, *Der Gottesglaube im alten Israel* (1900).



worship of the neighbouring nations. That is the strange thing, the mystery in the history of this people. There were always in its midst men, filled with the Spirit of God, who in powerful words and, if necessary, with vigorous deeds proclaimed the great truth to the nation, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was only one, who at the same time as Lord and God' governed all the nations. And yet the great mass of the people, in spite of all the warnings of their prophets, in spite of all the judgments of their God, again and again sank into the corruption of idolatry, into the folly of polytheism:

But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked :  
Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art become sleek :  
Then he forsook God which made him,  
And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.  
They moved him to jealousy with strange gods,  
With abominations provoked they him to anger.  
They sacrificed unto demons which are no God :  
To gods whom they knew not,  
To new gods that came up of late,  
Whom your fathers dreaded not.  
Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,  
And hast forgotten God that gave thee birth.

*Deut. XXXII, 15—18.*

The books of the prophets are full of complaints of the same kind. "Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made" (Is. II, 8). The prophet Jeremiah declares distinctly that this fact stands out unique in the religious history of the nations: "For pass over to the isles of Kittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there hath been such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. II, 10—13). It was not until the time of the

exile, when the nationality and independence of Israel, their capital and their national sanctuary were destroyed, that in the misery of the exile the inclination of the people to polytheism gradually died out.

This fact, that a nation, of its own accord, resisted and deserted the religion inherited from its ancestors, is quite unparalleled in the history of other religions. How is it to be accounted for? At all events it is not compatible with the assumption, which is also untenable in other respects, that monotheism is innate in the Semites. Not monotheism but polytheism was innate in this nation. But an uninterrupted line of prophets from Moses and Samuel up to Haggai and Malachi did, in the midst of an idolatrous people, again and again proclaim the knowledge of the one true God. This, too, is a fact which demands an explanation. If we ask these men themselves, how they were called to their work, they declare that they were the instruments of the one true God and received divine revelations through the Spirit of God. If we ask them for the source of their knowledge of God, they do not refer us to their or our own innermost selves, but to the living God and His revelation, which often came upon them like a irresistible power and forced them to speak against their will: "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed! I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out, I cry violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord is made a reproach unto me, and a derision all day. And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart, as it were, a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain" (Jerem. xx, 7—9). Thus the prophet Jeremiah describes how, entirely against his own will, he had to proclaim to his people God's judgment, for the very reason that they had deserted the living God and had devoted themselves to the immoral worship of idols.

Amos, one of the earliest prophets that have left written records of their message, describes in very original and forcible language, how he received God's revelation: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos III, 7. 8). And as it was with this, so it was with all other prophets. Wherever we inquire into their innermost consciousness, it bears witness to the fact that they proclaimed what God had shown and revealed to them through His Spirit. Not out of their own selves, but from above, out of the true living God Himself springs the fountain of revelation for them. Therefore they could oppose the polytheistic and idolatrous instincts of the great mass of their nation in virtue of the holy flame which had been kindled in them from above.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT ON GOD'S UNITY.

The New Testament also everywhere presupposes the unity of God as based upon the revelation of the Old Testament, and occasionally emphasizes it in explicit statements. When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus Christ repeated the ancient creed of Israel: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark XII, 29); and on the evening before his death he said to his heavenly Father: "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John XVII, 3). The apostles also in the face of the polytheism of the age refer again and again to that great truth: "Is God the God of the Jews only? is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: if so be, that God is one" (Romans III, 29. 30). While this declaration is directed against Jewish narrowness of heart and mind, the following is opposed to the erroneous belief in many gods: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven

or in earth, as there are gods many, and lords many, yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him" (1 Corinth. viii, 5. 6. Compare also 1 Tim. ii, 1—5). In view of the polytheism of the non-Christian world, which even to-day contaminates and corrupts the life of nations, the unity of God is a truth of the highest importance, which immediately appeals to the minds even of the uneducated, and which is an indispensable requirement of practical religion. For man has only one heart, which he cannot divide among many gods. It is only the one true God that we can trust; Him only can we love, Him only can we serve with all our heart and mind. Where a nation or tribe believes in many gods, there, with the progress of mental culture, doubt must arise and destroy all religious faith. But the belief in one God is quite compatible with the highest culture, nay more, it is imperiously demanded by that culture itself for the satisfaction both of the mind and the heart.

## 2. GOD THE PERSONAL SPIRIT.

In the same way as the Bible lays stress on the unity of God, it also emphasizes that God is Spirit, far above the growth and the decay of nature, also far above the unstable thoughts and deeds of men. God is Spirit—that, according to the Christian faith, does not mean that He is an impersonal entity; on the contrary, it means that He is the power that works everywhere and in everything, the fountain and essence of all life, and personal self-consciousness, knowing Himself, in His infinite might and glory, as well as the totality of His creatures, and yet independent of all created things, determining Himself according to His own free will. Being Spirit, God, of course, is invisible, without a material form, above the confines of space and time, but everywhere present with His personal self-consciousness, and working everywhere with His personal

will. In this sense, Christians also may call God the Absolute Spirit, for as such He has made Himself known to men in His revelation as contained in the Bible. Even Abraham must have become aware of this, when God said to him: "I am the Almighty God." As the Absolute Spirit God is almighty. But this truth, stated in a peculiar form, is the chief divine revelation that was given to Moses.

#### JEHOVAH AS REVEALED TO MOSES.

This revelation is summed up in the name Jehovah, or perhaps more correctly Jahveh. With regard to this, we read in Exod. III, 13—15: "And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jahveh the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." In this name of Jahveh is contained what was new in the revelation of God through Moses, the higher stage that was reached by him in the knowledge of the Supreme Being: "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jahveh: I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name Jahveh I was not known to them" (Exod. VI, 2. 3). In the passage first quoted we have at the same time an authentic interpretation of this name: "I am that I am". What is the meaning of these words? Suppose a man were to say to another, "I am that I am", that would certainly mean, I am always what I am, I shall always be the same. Vacillations of character, of will, of purpose are thereby denied; such a man may be relied upon. This is the

very thing which this name of God tells us. A very careful and at the same time critical scholar explains the meaning of this name in the following way: "With this name God stands in opposition not only to the impotent gods of other nations, but also to the whole created world. Contrary to their changeableness and dependence, the name designates God as a person ever like Himself and unchangeable; a person that is what He is only out of and through Himself, and to whom therefore alone true existence may be attributed. Thus this name expresses the unchangeableness and absolute independence of the Divine Person in contradistinction to the world."<sup>1</sup>

The name of Jahveh, therefore, contains in the simplest form everything essential that the Indian sages have said of the Brahman. Jehovah also is true, absolute existence. But He is much more than that. In Him we are brought face to face with a person, a truly absolute Spirit, who encompasses and comprises the fulness of His Being with His self-consciousness, and who as an "I" can speak to men. This divine "I" remains like itself in all the changes of natural development and in all the vicissitudes of human life and history. In other words, the God who has revealed Himself as Jahveh is, as a personal Spirit, transcendent to the world and remains true to Himself, to His being, His counsel, and His will. Therefore He is distinguished from the false, dead idols of the heathen as the living, *i. e.*, the truly existing God, and with regard to Israel, as the Faithful One, who ever keeps His covenant and fulfils His promises: "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of my salvation" (Ps. xviii, 46). Jehovah says of Himself: "For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever" (Deut. xxxii, 40). Because He is the Faithful One, who keeps His covenant inviolate, He is in the Psalms and in other passages extolled as a rock, the emblem of constancy:

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. E. Riehm, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p. 60.

For I will proclaim the name of the Lord :

Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

The rock, his work is perfect :

For all his ways are judgement :

A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,

Just and right is he.

*Deut. XXXII, 3. 4.*<sup>1</sup>

But God can be faithful to men, only because He remains faithful to His own being. He is absolutely constant, because He is absolutely independent, dependent on no one and nothing save Himself, determining Himself with His own free will.

#### GOD AS A SELF-CONSCIOUS PERSON.

These statements with regard to God's being would be meaningless, if He were not the absolute Spirit, *i. e.*, a self-conscious personality. That God, who has revealed Himself as Jahveh, is a spiritual personality and that as such He must not be represented in material forms and images, is the substance of the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them" (Exod. xx, 4. 5). Apart from polytheism, the great temptation to Israel was the worship of images, the inclination to worship Jahveh in the image of a creature. But thereby the absolute existence of God was degraded to the level of created things, and His spiritual personality debased to the sphere of the material and thus divested of its divine glory and greatness. Therefore the strict prohibition of idolatry, the deeper meaning of which Christ has so beautifully and adequately interpreted in the New Testament: "God is spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv, 24). God, whose essence is spirit, must be worshipped according to this essence, that is, not merely with the lips and outward postures and

<sup>1</sup> Compare also Ps. XVIII, 3. LXXI, 3.

gestures, nor with mere ceremonies and observances, but in the spirit, which is the image of God in man, and in truth, that is, in accordance with His self-revelation. This above all excludes every kind of idolatry.

The fact that already in the Old Testament the spiritual nature of God was known may be seen from the prayer offered by Solomon at the consecration of the first temple: "But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (1 Kings VIII, 27). In a similar way the prophet addresses the small community of exiles returning from Babylon: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto me? and what place shall be my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and so all these things came to be, saith the Lord" (Is. LXVI, 1. 2). In the same prophet we read: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations are as nothing before him; they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Is. XL, 15—18). Not in abstract terms, but in lively picturesque language, such as thrilled the souls of the saints and prophets, the spiritual nature of God is described in the Old Testament. But definite terms are not wanting: "Now the Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses flesh and not spirit" (Is. xxxi, 3). By placing man and flesh, on the one hand, in opposition to God and Spirit, on the other hand, it is quite evident that, to the consciousness of the Old Testament prophets, God is Spirit. And being Spirit, God is a living, self-conscious personality. The Bible and the Christian faith know nothing of an impersonal unconscious spirit. The God of Christianity is from beginning to end the personal, self-conscious Spirit, transcendental to



nature, ruling nature, and determining Himself according to His own sovereign will; the Spirit who reveals Himself to men, to whom men can pray, and with whom they can enter into personal fellowship.

### THE OBJECTIONS OF PANTHEISM.

We cannot find a limitation of God's spiritual nature in His being conceived as a personal Being. Only the negation of His personality would be such a limitation. In nature freedom from its blind forces and laws begins with the self-conscious personality of man. Inorganic matter, plants, and animals are all governed by unchangeable laws. Man alone, in virtue of his self-consciousness, which is also the basis for moral character, rises above the compulsion of nature to free self-determination and free moral actions. All that by which man is distinguished from other creatures, by which he rises above nature, and receives a higher value not to be compared with nature, all this has its origin in the fact of his being endowed with personal self-consciousness. His personal self-consciousness is not a limitation to him, but a means of breaking through the enslaving limits within which unconscious nature is confined. The only limit for man lies in his being a finite, created personality.

But nothing prevents us from conceiving an infinite personality, *i. e.*, an absolute Spirit. Self-consciousness is the fundamental condition of all moral freedom, self-determination, and superiority over nature. He who denies personal self-consciousness to God, denies His absolute spirituality and degrades Him into the sphere of finite, relative, dependent existence. His existence would then be absolutely identical with nature. There is no essential difference between such pantheistic monism and rank materialism. The only difference is that the former presents itself in imaginative poetry and the latter in honest prose. It is needless to explicitly point out that with the self-conscious personality of God His moral nature and even His

infinity are also lost. For nature, with which the Supreme Being would then be identical, is exclusively composed of finite things, and though we may add ever so many finite things together, they will never constitute an infinite entity. But the absolute, personal Spirit is in Himself infinite. Has not even the finite spirit of man something within it, that is analogous to infinity, *viz.*, the capability of receiving ever fresh knowledge and acting morally with ever new self-determination?

In contradistinction to the impersonal Brahman of philosophic Hinduism, the God of the Bible, being an absolute, spiritual personality, is also the God that hears prayer and works miracles. In the Old Testament the revelation of God from Moses down to the prophets is accompanied by miracles. And the life and work of Jesus Christ, who is the final revelation of God, is of a thoroughly miraculous character. He himself, as the personal revelation of God, is also the greatest miracle. That would be quite incredible, if the God of Christianity were a mere impersonal entity. But as He is an absolute, *i. e.*, self-determining, free personality, it is no inconsistency, but the direct outcome of His nature that He works miracles and answers prayer. Nature, the universe, which owe their existence to God, cannot at the same time constitute fetters that would prevent Him from working out His purpose. As He created them according to His free will and rules them in sovereign freedom, so He, as the absolute Spirit, may always use them freely according to His will and for His purpose.

#### OTHER ATTRIBUTES OF GOD AS ABSOLUTE SPIRIT.

That in the absolute spirituality of God a number of other attributes are included, need not be pointed out in detail; it is sufficient to draw attention to the fact. As the Absolute Spirit God is eternal, omnipresent, almighty, omniscient, and all-wise, for neither time nor any other power is a limit to Him. All these attributes have been extolled by the Psalmists in ever memorable words:

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place  
 In all generations.  
 Before the mountains were brought forth,  
 Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
 Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

*Ps. XC, 1, 2.*<sup>1</sup>

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.  
 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,  
 Thou understandest my thoughts afar off.  
 Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,  
 And art acquainted with all my ways.  
 For there is not a word in my tongue,  
 But, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

*Ps. CXXXIX, 1—4.*

O Lord, how manifold are thy works!  
 In wisdom hast thou made them all:  
 The earth is full of thy riches.

*Ps. CIV, 24.*

We may, however, say that all this, which is so beautifully detailed in the Psalms, is already included in the fact that God is the absolute and personal Spirit.

### 3. GOD—HOLY LOVE.

But the description of God's nature is not yet complete. In connection with His spiritual personality we have already noticed that His nature is ethically determined. As superior to nature, absolutely independent and constant, He is also absolutely good. His constancy means simply that His morally and absolutely perfect nature remains ever the same.

#### GOD'S HOLINESS.

In the Old Testament the moral nature of God finds its expression chiefly in emphasizing His holiness and righteousness.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Ps. CII, 24—27.

That God is the holy one is included in His revelation as Jehovah. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. XI, 44. 45; XIX, 2). God's holiness is a feature of the Old Testament and generally of the Christian conception of God, which in no other religion finds so distinct and so powerful an expression. In Hinduism as in other non-Christian religions the idea of holiness is almost entirely absent. At the utmost we find the idea of ceremonial holiness, which, however, is morally indifferent. It was just this character of moral holiness in Jehovah's nature which made it so difficult for the mass of the people to continue in the faith and service of this holy God. For whereas Jehovah, the Holy One, commanded that His people should approach and serve Him in the beauty of moral holiness, the worship of other gods in the neighbourhood always provided for the vile satisfaction of the impure lusts of the flesh. These orgies of carnal lust continually formed the strongest temptation for the Israelites to serve those foreign gods. In opposition to this Jehovah is called "the Holy One of Israel" (Is. I, 4; XLII, 14. Ps. LXXI, 22).

What, then, is more accurately the meaning of Jehovah's holiness? The word *holy* is applied to both men and things, and means what is withdrawn from common use and set apart for, or dedicated to, the service of God. Thus to make holy, to sanctify, often simply means to separate, to set apart. In this sense the priests were holy; the tabernacle as God's dwelling place, the Sabbath as God's day, Sinai as God's mountain, on which He revealed Himself, the altar on which sacrifices are offered to God,—all these things were holy. Israel as a nation, inasmuch as it was separated from the service of the Egyptian and Canaanite gods, and destined for the service of Jehovah, was also called holy. Now, if God says of Himself, "I am holy", that means that He is different from everything outside Himself and superior to everything else. As the Holy One, Jehovah is especially separated from sin, from the moral impurity of men and far removed from the corruption of sin. Therefore, the holiness of God in the Old Testament means

His moral purity, superiority, and perfection. Because the gods of other nations and their worship are tainted with the abominations of sin, therefore Jehovah, compared with them, is called the Holy One: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exod. xv, 11). And because God, far removed from all the impurity of sin, shines in bright, moral perfection, therefore also Israel, His people, is to divest itself of all that is physically unclean and loathsome, and all that is morally impure and opposed to the holiness of Jehovah, in order to be a holy people, inwardly and outwardly.

Among the prophets, Isaiah powerfully emphasizes the holiness of God. In the vision in which he is called and consecrated to the work of a prophet, the Seraphim before the throne of God cry out with covered faces: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Is. vi, 3). And the prophet himself exclaims: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Is. vi, 5). Henceforth the prophet was so deeply impressed with the holiness of God that he frequently names Him "the Holy One of Israel". In the judgements of God especially the prophet, and with him the whole Old Testament, recognises God's holiness, which destroys sin together with the man that will not separate himself from it nor sanctify himself: "And the mean man is brought down, and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: but the Lord of hosts is exalted in judgement, and God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness" (Is. v, 15, 16).

Akin to the holiness of God, and the outcome of it, is the wrath, the jealousy of God, His holy indignation with regard to sin, revealing itself in His judgement upon it. While announcing a whole series of punishments, the prophet exclaims again and again: "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still" (Is. ix, 11. 17. 21; x, 4). And

in the Decalogue punishment is thus declared: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exod. xx, 5).

The New Testament also insists on the fact that God is holy and turns against the sinner in holy indignation: "For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebr. xii, 29). It is quite true that wherever in the New Testament mention is made of God's wrath, the eye is directed to God's judgement, very often to the last judgement. But for that reason we are not justified in simply putting "God's judgement" for "God's wrath" in the New Testament. The judgements which are accomplished already in the course of history (Rom. i, 18—32) and the last final judgement, are but so many indications and manifestations of God's holy indignation against sin and unrighteousness. God would not be holy, that is to say, He would not be God, if He did not in holy indignation hate sin which works so much disorder, corruption, and distress in this world. Therefore, especially in those visions of God's final judgement the heavenly host extols the holiness of God: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgements are made manifest" (Rev. xv, 3. 4). Again St. John, the apostle of love, puts it most beautifully: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John i, 5. 6). The opposite phrase, "walking in darkness", which undoubtedly means living in sin, shows distinctly that "light" here means God's holiness, His moral purity and perfection. This conception of God's moral purity and perfection, without which the nature of God is quite inconceivable, is a peculiar feature of the Christian religion, to which nothing equal is found in any other religion.

## GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Parallel to God's holiness, we often find God's righteousness mentioned in the Bible. We are accustomed to think that God's righteousness or justice simply means that He punishes sin and wickedness and rewards virtue and righteousness. But this is not a correct interpretation of the biblical conception. The first meaning of the biblical term is "to be straight". Righteous action, therefore, means acting so as not to swerve from the straight line. For human actions this line is drawn by the revealed will of God. The righteous man in the Old Testament is he who orders his life entirely according to the revealed will, or the law of God. The same rule applies to God's doings. God is righteous inasmuch as His actions, His government of individual men and whole nations, agree with His revealed will. But the revelation of the divine will includes both the announcement of judgement and the punishment of sinners that trespass against His commandments, and the promise of divine favour and salvation to those who fear Him and obey His commandments. By carrying out the one as well as the other God shows Himself as the Righteous One. We have already seen that in the judgements of God His holiness as well as His righteousness are recognised and glorified. In this sense both the Old and the New Testaments often speak of God's righteousness. We call this side of God's righteousness distributive justice. But in the Old Testament God's righteousness often manifests itself in working salvation, so that in some passages, especially in Isaiah XL—LXVI, some scholars feel inclined to translate "grace" instead of "righteousness", which, however, is not permissible. It is not necessary to quote many passages to illustrate this point, but a few particularly instructive ones may be quoted: "I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory" (Is. XLVI, 13). "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine

arms shall judge the peoples; the isles shall wait for me, and on mine arm shall they trust" (Is. LI, 5). Here clearly "righteousness" stands parallel to "salvation", both mean good for God's exiled people. The explanation seems to be this: in working salvation for His people according to His promise, God reveals at the same time His righteousness, *i. e.*, His actions which never swerve from the straight line once drawn by Himself. Similarly it is said in Ps. xxiv, 5: "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." The faithfulness and truthfulness of God are often extolled in a similar way as His righteousness. "He is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. xxxii, 4).

The righteousness of God is thus very closely connected with His faithfulness, which finds its most pregnant expression in the name of Jehovah. But for all that God's righteousness is not identical with His faithfulness. He carries out His threatened judgements also because He is righteous.

In the New Testament the two sides of God's righteousness are also to be found. If the Apostle Paul speaks of "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God", he clearly thinks of God's distributive justice, by which He will execute all His judgements upon those who have hardened themselves in sin and unbelief (Rom. II, 1—5; Acts xvii, 31). By rendering to every man according to his deeds, without respect of persons, He shows Himself as the just and righteous One (Rom. II, 6—13).

But the apostle knows also another side of God's righteousness: "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith, by his blood, to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season, that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath



faith in Jesus" (Rom. III, 22—26). In setting forth Jesus Christ as a propitiation for sin, through faith in His blood, that is, His sufferings and death, God wished to declare His righteousness, and that so much the more, as in times long passed by He overlooked the sins of men with forbearance, but without atonement. In the present time, however, He offers atonement for sin in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, through whom a redemption was accomplished. On the ground of this redemption He can now exhibit His justice, and that in such a way that He continues to be the righteous one, and shows Himself the justifier; and this justification belongs to those who have faith in Jesus Christ. We may here find a manifestation of God's distributive justice, for in providing the atonement in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ a holy judgement upon sin was executed. But in the application of this atonement for the justification of the sinner God's righteousness manifests itself in providing salvation, in carrying out His work of justification in accordance with the holy plan laid down by Himself, *viz.*, that whosoever believes in Jesus is accepted by God as righteous. In a similar way John says: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John I, 9). In forgiving the repentant sinner and cleansing him from his sins God acts only in accordance with His revealed gracious will; therefore He manifests Himself both as the faithful and the just one. For His justice always means the harmony of His doings with His revealed will.

#### GOD'S LOVE.

With this conception of God's righteousness we are approaching the highest triumph of the revelation of God's nature: "God is love" (1 John IV, 16). With this the New Testament brings to a focus the whole revelation of, and all the statements concerning, the moral nature of God. It is, however, folly and ignorance to say that the God of the New

Testament is the God of love, but the God of the Old Testament an angry, cruel being, and that the two stand opposed to each other in irreconcilable contradiction. On the contrary, this short, but inexhaustible statement that God is love, has grown out of the Old Testament like the foliage of a tree from its root. He who cuts off the Old Testament root will soon see the New Testament tree wither. Among the men of the Old Testament none showed more zeal for God than Moses, the first of the prophets. But when the dance round the golden calf filled and shocked his soul with holy indignation, he spoke these consoling words: "The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin: and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation" (Ex. xxxiv, 6. 7). The New Testament itself could not speak more beautifully of the God of love who, with all His holy jealousy against sin, yet forgives iniquity, if it is repented of. The song of Moses, however strong in announcing God's judgement, beautifully describes God's tender love for His people:

For the Lord's portion is his people;  
 Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.  
 He found him in a desert land,  
 And in the waste, howling wilderness;  
 He encompassed him, he cared for him,  
 He kept him as the apple of his eye:  
 As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,  
 That fluttereth over her young,  
 He spread abroad his wings, taketh them,  
 He bare them on his pinions.

*Deut. XXXII, 9—11.*

And in the blessing of Moses we read, "Yea, he (Jehovah) loved the people" (Deut. xxxiii, 3). Compare also Psalms xxiii and ciii, where the love of God to His own is extolled in words of unsurpassed beauty. In the prophets we find similar passages—compare Is. xl, 1. 2; xliii, 1—6, xlix, 13—16; liv, 7—10.

In the presence of such testimonies concerning the love of God, it is inexcusable ignorance to say that the God of the Old Testament is a bloodthirsty tyrant.

But, of course, the fullness of God's love has only been revealed to us through Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. And whereas in the Old Testament in the first place the people of Israel, or only the repentant remnant of the people, is the object of divine love, this love is revealed in Jesus Christ in its unlimited universality and at the same time for every individual man: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life" (John III, 16).

Love is devotion of self to others and self-sacrifice. In giving up His only Son for the salvation of the world, God gives Himself to the world and gives the world eternal life. But the greatness of God's love is chiefly manifest in His giving Himself in Christ to the world, that is, to all humanity, without excluding one single soul from His love, — to the world which through its sin had separated itself from Him and lived in enmity against Him. With this the self-revelation of God, the revelation of His love, reaches its climax. Therefore Paul says: "If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (Rom. VIII, 31. 32). And in the same epistle: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v, 8). Properly speaking all this is already contained in the father-name of God, which Jesus Christ taught us. A father's natural disposition towards his children is love. Therefore it is practically the same thing, if Jesus teaches us to call on God as "Our Father", and if John triumphantly exclaims: "God is love!"

But then, God is holy love. His fatherly love towards us lacks neither truth nor energy. The holiness of God is not opposed to His love, but both together constitute the true character and nature of God. The aim of God's love, its

work and its manifestation, is the delivery of man from the guilt, the power, and the corruption of sin. A love which aims not at that salvation, would not only be a contradiction of God's holiness; it would be no true love at all, but only a weak, repulsive caricature of it. We see this kind of love often enough among men, but with God such love is impossible. His love seeks to make men truly and lastingly happy, which can be secured only by saving them from the corruption of sin. Every honest man knows that guilt is the greatest of all evils, that our most dangerous and most pernicious enemy is our own sin. Whoever delivers us from this, entertains true love for us, because he brings about our true happiness. That is what God's love does for us. This knowledge, based on experience, is the highest triumph of the Christian faith. We may confidently say that no other religion has anything to equal this. The conception of the Godhead in philosophic Hinduism contains absolutely nothing that may be compared with it. In its conception of the Godhead, so far as it does not adapt itself to mythological forms of belief which, according to its own avowal, have no reality, all ethical attributes of the Godhead are emphatically denied. Of course, we are aware that popular Hinduism addresses some of its deities as "Ocean of grace (*kṛipāsāgara*)", "Treasure of grace (*kṛipānidhi*)", and "Seat of grace (*kṛipāspada*)", but these terms have no reality. They may occasionally be the expression of a heart groaning in its misery and craving for divine favour and help. But philosophic Hinduism, if it is to be consistent and does not deny its own fundamental principles, cannot concede real existence to the gods thus addressed, nor can it admit that they have love, and the will to exercise it. And in the face of the unrestricted gross polytheism of the Indian people this criticism is undoubtedly right.

#### CHRISTIAN FAITH AND MODERN SCIENCE.

With our Christian faith in God's holy love and in His moral character, we Christians can also fearlessly and confidently

face the results of modern science. Some educated Hindus try in vain to persuade themselves and others that modern science in alliance with positivist or agnostic philosophy has once for all dealt the death-blow to Christianity. Science might accomplish this only with those who imagine they have faith, but who in reality have their heads filled only with a few fragments of church doctrine and tradition. But that is not faith as the Bible teaches it. On the other hand, there always have been great scientists, who continued steadfast in their Christian faith or returned to it again, and who in their Christian faith found rest and eternal life for their souls. As scientists of our own time we will mention only Professors Drummond and Romanes.

In reality, modern science and agnostic philosophy cannot satisfy the needs of the heart and the whole moral nature of man. Neither do they really satisfy our intellect. Without God, science is knowledge not worth having. This knowledge of science, as well as the avowed ignorance of agnosticism, is simply overwhelmed by the innumerable awful mysteries and riddles of nature. Without the God of love, nature becomes a horrible wilderness, in which the most fearful mysteries lurk like beasts of prey. The awful infinity of the universe with its unsympathetic mass of matter must crush the mind and heart of him who does not also know of a moral infinity. Dead matter, which yet serves as a basis for such inexhaustible life, and the origin and the development of that life are riddles, which ought to impress science with the consciousness of its own insufficiency. People may deny the teleology of the order and processes of nature, but it will, as a threatening hydra, raise its head again and again in the face of the unbelieving scientist. But for the Christian, who believes in the living God of love, the world is pervaded by a kindly light, which makes the beauty of nature twice beautiful, both in its physical aspect and as a reflection of God's own glory, and gives to the laws of nature, according to which the universe is governed, their real significance and interpretation.

We do not say that through faith in God all the mysteries of nature are immediately cleared up, but through this faith they lose their oppressive horror.

Science or agnostic philosophy can by no means prove the impossibility of the existence of a personal God in the sense of the Christian faith. Every scientist, and also every agnostic philosopher, really believes in a Supreme Being of some description. They call it the "first cause", "the unknown", "the unknowable", or simply "Nature". These are, of course, abstractions, but they prove that the world does not consist of dead matter only. If these people assert that the God of the Christian faith is unknown to them, this must unhesitatingly be admitted. It is the grain of truth contained in agnosticism, that the natural man does not know God. But we Christians know the living God from experience. We have experienced His holiness, which condemns the sinner, and His crushing judgement upon sin; but we have also experienced His love, which pardons sin and delivers from the power of sin, which sanctifies us and fills us with life. This experience is to us much more real than any result of modern science, and it is accessible to everybody. Whosoever wishes can experience that God is holy love. We also believe that men of science are at present longing for something better than science can give them, and that therefore many of them will return to the Christian faith. Let us hear what a man saturated with modern culture, the editor of the French magazine, *Revue des deux Mondes*, which always faithfully records the pulsation of modern intellectual life, has to say on this subject:

We do not now, as was the case twenty-five years ago and even later, suppose unbelief to be a proof of liberal views and comprehensive breadth of mind. In those times the negation of the supernatural was considered to be the real condition of a philosophic mind. Intoxicated with the consciousness of knowing a little more than our forefathers, we boasted of having annihilated, abolished, and ridiculed mystery. Voltairism was still alive, and it was considered good taste to adhere to it. If you want to know what has become of it, I may refer you to Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* or to Proudhon's simple and definite declarations in connection with Renan's *Life of Jesus*. Being once surrounded with obscurities, which seem to become the darker the

more we take pains to penetrate them, and being moreover doomed to see the supernatural again and again rising on the horizon of our knowledge, we have arrived at the conviction that the sincerest, humblest and loftiest faith, and the most comprehensive and, to say all, the most modern science may dwell together in the same brain.<sup>1</sup>

Philosophy might become dangerous only to that belief in God which is obtained by means of philosophy or science. Those modern Hindus, who boast of possessing a scientific religion and a philosophic belief in God, ought to remember this. What science and philosophy sedulously build up to-day, they destroy to-morrow with unsparing criticism. This critical philosophy will thoroughly and inexorably do its work with regard to the philosophic belief in the Supreme Being of Neo-Hinduism also. The Christian faith in God, which rests on the historic revelation of God and the real experience of the heart, has as yet survived all criticism, because it is inaccessible and incomprehensible to scientific and philosophic criticism. But only children in scientific and philosophic thought can entertain the delusion that religious knowledge, which is not obtained by means of philosophy, must be untrue or worthless. "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Basler Kirchenfreund* 1898, No. 7, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

PART II.

**THE COSMOLOGICAL PRE-SUPPOSITION  
OF SALVATION:**

THE CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD.





# I. THE CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

## 1. CREATION AND PRESERVATION IN THE VEDIC HYMNS.

Every religion contains ideas concerning the world, its origin, its purpose, and its value,—in a word, what we call a conception of the world. However imperfectly it may be shaped, however little it may be developed, it is contained in every religious belief and is most closely connected with the belief in God. The power and significance of the belief in God in every religion have their test and confirmation in the conception of the world. And as the world is chiefly considered as the sphere of human existence, and moreover, as man forms an important part of the world, the conception of the world is also related to the conception of salvation or the supreme good. This is especially the case with Hinduism. Because it conceives the world and man in a specific way, *viz.*, as a product of Avidyā, or ignorance, it must also form a specific conception of salvation. Likewise in Christianity man is created after the image of God, and therefore destined for the kingdom of God. In a word, the conception of the world is the cosmological pre-supposition of salvation or the *summum bonum*.

With regard to the study of the conception of the world in philosophic Hinduism, we must first of all turn to the Vedic hymns, its most ancient and most important documents. Another reason why we must begin with the study of the ideas found

in the hymns, is that only in doing so can we obtain the historical basis indispensable for the consideration of the more philosophic ideas on the subject; for there the later philosophic ideas have their origin. In the more ancient Vedic hymns the creation of the universe is, in a thoroughly kathenotheistic fashion, ascribed now to this and now to that deity. We have met instances of this before, in the consideration of the Vedic deities, for instance p. 27 ff. and in other places. Dr. Muir, in volume IV of his *Sanskrit-Texts*<sup>1</sup>, quotes a number of passages, in which Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Sūrya, Soma, Parjanya, and Viṣṇu are, by turns, extolled more or less distinctly as creators and rulers of the universe. It is not possible here to quote all these passages. We shall quote only two passages addressed to Indra, because in them the development which finally produced the particular god Viśvakarman, the architect of the universe, may be observed:

Thou hast established in her seat, O Indra,  
the level earth, vast, vigorous, unbounded.  
The bull hath propped the heaven and air's mid-region.  
By thee sent onward let the floods flow hither.

*Rig. III, 30, 9.*<sup>2</sup>

In another passage Indra is called the architect of the universe (*viśvakarman*):

Thou Indra art the Conqueror; thou gavest splendour to the sun.  
Maker of all things, thou art Mighty and All-God.

*Rig. VIII, 87. 2.*

The honorific title of "Maker of all things" or "Architect of the universe" might as well be given to Varuṇa and other gods. Later on, this attribute of Indra developed into a special god, to whom some of the latest hymns of the *Rigveda* are addressed. Although these hymns contain much that is obscure, that with which we are concerned here, is tolerably clear.

<sup>1</sup> P. 84 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Compare also *Rig. II, 12, 1. 2.*

- 1 He who sate down as Hotar-priest, the Rishi,  
our Father, offering up all things existing—  
He seeking through his wish a great possession,  
came among men on earth as archetypal.
- 2 What was the place whereon he took his station?  
what was it that supported him? how was it?  
Whence Viśvakarman, seeing all, producing  
the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens.
- 3 He who hath eyes on all sides round about him,  
a mouth on all sides, arms and feet on all sides,  
He, the Sole God, producing earth and heaven,  
weldeth them, with his arms as wings, together.
- 4 What was the tree, what wood in sooth produced it,  
from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven?  
Ye thoughtful men inquire within your spirit,  
whereon he stood when he established all things.
- 5 Thine highest, lowest, sacrificial natures,  
and these thy mid-most here, O Viśvakarman,  
Teach thou thy friends at sacrifice, O Blessed,  
and come thyself, exalted, to our worship.
- 6 Bring thou thyself, exalted with oblation,  
O Viśvakarman, Earth and Heaven to worship.  
Let other men around us live in folly:  
here let us have a rich and liberal patron.
- 7 Let us invoke to-day, to aid our labour,  
the Lord of Speech, the thought-swift Viśvakarman,  
May he hear kindly all our invocations  
who gives all bliss for aid, whose works are righteous.

*Rig. X, 81.*

In this hymn, the creation of the universe and a universal sacrifice seem to be intertwined in mystic twilight. The creator is here at the same time the priest who directs the sacrifice, and towards the end he even seems to act the part of the rich patron of the sacrifice and to dismiss his human priests with rich gifts. He has also to make the great sacrifice effective, by offering himself and his works, *i. e.*, heaven and earth, as an oblation. What is of particular interest to us are the questions with regard to the procedure, the material, and the extent of the work of creation. As regards the procedure, the creator is represented as a gigantic blacksmith, who with his strong arms, which also serve as wings to fan the fire, welds,

or literally, blows together the universe. But where did he take his stand, where was the support on which he, as it were, put the lever of the great work? And when he produced the earth, whence did he then fetch heaven in order to unfold it to the eyes of the spectators? And finally, whence and from what forest was the timber taken, the material by means of which the great house, the universe, was built? All these questions remain unanswered. But we see how, out of this confusion of mythological ideas, there arose questions of philosophic significance, which, however, the Rishi could not or would not answer. The great house of the universe is represented as three-storied, containing upper, middle, and lower apartments, which probably mean heaven, mid-air, and earth. With regard to these, the poet and his friends would like to be enlightened by the architect of the universe himself. Thus this speculation on the origin of the universe ends in a question, which is apt to call forth fresh speculations.

The same or at least a similar question quivers on the lips of the author of the following hymn :

- 1 The father of the eye, the Wise in spirit,  
created both these worlds submerged in fatness.  
Then when the eastern ends were firmly fastened,  
the heavens and the earth were far extended.
- 2 Mighty in mind and power is Viśvakarman,  
Maker, Disposer, and most lofty Presence.  
Their offerings joy in rich juice where they value  
One, only One, beyond the seven Rishis.
- 3 Father who made us, he who, as Disposer,  
knoweth all races and all things existing,  
Even he alone, the Deities' name-giver, —  
him other beings seek for information.
- 4 To him in sacrifice they offered treasures, —  
Rishis of old, in numerous troops, as singers,  
Who in the distant, near, and lower region,  
made ready all these things that have existence.
- 5 That which is earlier than this earth and heaven,  
before the Asuras and Gods had being, —  
What was the germ primeval which the waters  
received where all the Gods were seen together?

- 6 The waters, they received that germ primeval  
 wherein the Gods were gathered altogether.  
 It rested set upon the Unborn's navel,  
 that One wherein abide all things existing.
- 7 Ye will not find him who produced these creatures:  
 another thing hath risen up among you.  
 Enwraught in misty cloud, with lips that stammer,  
 hymn-chanters wander and are discontented.

*Rig. X, 82.*

Viśvakarman is here called the father of the eye, *i.e.*, the Maker of the sun or the light which enables the eye to see, and also of men, the Creator and Disposer of all things. Then he is called the "most lofty presence", *i.e.*, the highest image or object of spiritual contemplation. This is also the "One" of whom it is said that he stands high above the "Seven Rishis", *i.e.*, the constellation *Ursa Major*, which, of course, means, in the highest heaven. According to v. 3, other beings also ask the Creator of the universe about this "One". This One is the first germ of creation (v. 5), received by the waters, which are considered by our Rishi as the maternal principle in generating the universe. Thus the "One" is the principle of existence in all that is created; in it all creatures have their existence (v. 6). It is difficult to say who is meant by the "Unborn", upon whose navel the One is placed. Most likely it is the Creator himself. Thus he bore within him the principle and the potentialities of the worlds to be created. Strictly speaking the poet does not tell us what this "One" is; perhaps his own ideas with regard to it were not quite definite and distinct. "You do not find him who produced these creatures," he exclaims. For another thing had risen up among them for which they cared much more. We can only venture a guess with regard to this other thing. Perhaps it was the pursuit of temporal gain and enjoyment, which actuated the singers of those times. Enveloped in the mist of their hymns, the meaning of which only they themselves could understand, they wandered about the country, and yet their greed for reward to be gained by sacrifices

was never satisfied. Such people have no taste for the "One" extolled by the author of our hymn. Nor does this hymn contain a distinct answer to the question concerning the origin of the world. On the one hand, there is the personal Creator of the universe; on the other, the impersonal principle of existence. At one time it seems as if the Creator himself owed his existence to this mystical entity (v. 2), and then again he seems to be the Unborn who carries that entity within himself and deposits it in the womb of the waters, which, in their turn, bring forth the universe. Thus it will be seen that this Rishi is vacillating between mythological imagination and philosophic thought.

#### THE LORD OF CREATURES.

Besides Viśvakarman, already in the later hymns of the R̥gveda, and afterwards in the Yajurveda and Brāhmaṇas, there appears another deity as Creator, *viz.*, Prajāpati, the Lord of creatures. He is referred to at the close of R̥gveda x, 121. Of course, in the later sacrificial literature, in which he constantly appears, there are no more traces left of the poetical charm and the philosophic depth of the R̥gveda hymns. In those later writings it is said of Prajāpati:

1 In the beginning was the non-existent. We ask, What was the non-existent? The holy singers say, "In the beginning was the non-existent."

2 They (the gods), burning with desire for that which hides itself from the eye, created seven different men.

3 They said, as it is so with us, we cannot bring forth these seven men. Let us create one man. Thus they created those seven men into one man.

5 This very man became Prajāpati. He is piled upon the altar as Agni.

8 This man Prajāpati desired, "I should like to multiply myself, I should like to propagate myself." He made efforts and practised penance . . . and first created prayer, the threefold Veda . . .

9 He created the waters out of the word, even out of space. The word is his. It was created. It pervaded the universe . . .

10 It desired, "May I be born out of these waters!" Thus he entered with the threefold Veda into water. Therefrom arose an egg. He touched it and said, "It shall be, it shall be, and once more, it shall be." Of this was created prayer, the threefold Veda.—*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa VI, 1, 1 ff.*

It is difficult to pick out a substantial thought from this mass of words. The process of creation here begins with the non-existent, but we neither learn what the non-existent was, nor how it developed into the existent. The gods suddenly appear on the scene, trying to create seven men. Failing in this attempt, they content themselves with the creation of the one Prajāpati, who is identified with Agni. Thus the Lord of creatures, before he could proceed with the work of creation, had to be created himself. In his work of creation, he, as a matter of course to the priestly author, first creates prayer (*brahman*), viz., the three Vedas. Then out of the word (*vāch*) which probably here also means the Veda, the word of revelation, he creates the waters. Now, when in consequence of a desire—probably the “will to live”—he proceeds to reproduce himself, he enters with the creative principle of Vedic knowledge into the waters, by which act the world-egg is produced. He touches it with the thrice-repeated call, “It shall be!” whereby the threefold Veda is again born. The Veda, thus, is the beginning and end of creation. But the world-egg is henceforth a constant quantity in the creation myths of later literature. Compare Code of Manu I, 5—13. According to this myth, Brahmā, another Creator, is born in the world-egg. Then it goes on:

When the Blessed had dwelt in this golden egg for the space of a full year, then, indeed, through his own reflection he divided that egg into two parts. The primeval Spirit of these two halves created the highest heaven there, the earth below, the eight regions, the mid-air, the eternal place of the waters between both.

An account of the same evolution is also to be found in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI, 1, 6, 1—14:

In the beginning this universe was water, a mere flood of waves. These waters desired, “How can we propagate ourselves?” Then they made an effort and practised austerities. When they practised austerities, a golden egg was produced. After having come into existence, it became a year. Then this golden egg swam about for the time of about a year... Thereof came in a year a man, Prajāpati... He broke the golden egg. Then he had no place to stand upon. Therefore, for a year’s time, he carried the golden egg about with him and swam in it. After a year he attempted to speak. He said, “Bhūh”, and so the earth came into existence. He said, “Svah”, and so the



highest heaven came into existence. He continued to worship and to make efforts. He conceived offspring in himself. He created the gods with his mouth.... While he was creating, heaven came into existence for him... The following deities were created out of Prajāpati: Agni, Indra, Soma, Parameshṭi, the son of Prajāpati.

It would be useless to try to find a deeper thought in these words. On the one hand, the gods create the Lord of creatures; on the other hand, he comes out of the golden egg, which had its origin in the flood of the primeval waters, and finally he himself creates not only heaven and earth, but also the gods. Theosophic speculation, however, seized upon him in order to identify him with the universe, and to derive from his union with the female principle Vāch, *i.e.*, the word, the origin of all creatures:

Prajāpati alone was this universe. He had Vāch as his mate. He united with her. She became pregnant. She went away from him. She gave birth to these creatures. She returned into Prajāpati. *Kāthaka XII, 5.*

Here, too, there is but little meaning in the mythical mystery. Only this much is clear, that the creation of the world is conceived as a birth out of the Godhead, as a process of emanation.

### COSMOGONY AND THEOGONY.

But the gods, according to ancient Indian views, are also part of what has been created. Thus the cosmogonic process is at the same time a process of theogony. Both the production of the gods and the production of the world are found side by side in the following hymn:

- 1 Let us with tuneful skill proclaim these generations of the gods,  
That one may see them when these hymns are chanted in a future age.
- 2 These Brahmanaspati produced with blast and smelting, like a smith,  
Existence, in an earlier age of Gods, from Non-existence sprang.
- 3 Existence, in the earliest age of Gods, from Non-existence sprang.  
Thereafter were the regions born. This sprang from the Productive Power.
- 4 Earth sprang from the Productive Power the regions from the earth  
were born.  
Daksha was born of Aditi, and Aditi was Daksha's child.

- 5 For Aditi, O Daksha, she who is thy daughter, was brought forth.  
After her were the blessed Gods born sharers of immortal life.
- 6 When ye, O Gods, in yonder deep close clasping one another stood,  
Thence, as of dancers, from your feet a thickening cloud of dust arose.
- 7 When, O ye Gods, like Yatis, ye caused all existing things to grow,  
Then ye brought Sūrya forward, who was lying hidden in the sea.
- 8 Eight are the sons of Aditi, who from her body sprang to life.  
With seven she went to meet the Gods: she cast Mārtāṇḍa far away.
- 9 So with her Seven Sons Aditi went forth to meet the earlier age.  
She brought Mārtāṇḍa thitherward to spring to life and die again.

*Rig. X, 72.*

The poet, in singing of the births of the gods, regards Brahmanaspati as the smith who welded together the births of the gods; in other words, the other gods owe their existence to him. As now the gods, who before did not exist, come into existence, the Existent springs out of the Non-existent. The Non-existent may, however, also mean the undeveloped, shapeless mass of matter, out of which the multiform, developed existence of individual creatures is supposed to have been evolved. Then a new mythological person appears on the scene, the "productive power" Uttānapad, from whom the earth and the regions were born. All this, and how Daksha is supposed to be both the father and the son of Aditi, can hardly be realised by western imagination. In v. 6 water again appears as the creative power, in the midst of which the gods stand close clasping and causing a thick cloud of dust or spray to arise. Does that mean the numerous individual creatures? Somehow the gods cause all existing things to come into existence, and the sun comes forth out of the ocean, *i.e.*, mid-air, and appears to the admiring eyes of the creatures. Thus it appears that here the gods together produce the world, whereas they themselves owe their existence to Brahmanaspati. Besides this, we may find in the hymn the idea that Existence sprang from Non-existence, an idea which gives rise to further speculations.

## THE NĀSADIYA SŪKTA.

This idea is the connecting link between the hymn of the births of the gods and the Nāsadiya Sūkta, in which the doubting question concerning the origin of the world is raised again and receives a speculative answer, which, however, does not seem to satisfy the poet:

- 1 Then was not non-existent nor existent,  
there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.  
What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter?  
Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?
- 2 Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal:  
no sign was there, the day's and night's divider.  
That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature:  
apart from it was nothing whatsoever.
- 3 Darkness was there: at first concealed in darkness  
this All was indiscriminated chaos,  
All that existed then was void and formless:  
by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit.
- 4 Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning,  
Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit.  
Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered  
the existent's kinship in the non-existent.
- 5 Transversely was their severing line extended:  
what was above it then, and what below it?  
There were begetters, there were mighty forces,  
free action here and energy up yonder.
- 6 Who verily knows and who can here declare it,  
whence it was born and whence comes this creation?  
The Gods are later than this world's production.  
Who knows then whence it first came into being?
- 7 He, the first origin of this creation,  
whether he formed it all or did not form it,  
Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven,  
he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

*Rig. X, 129.*

At the beginning, before there was a universe, both the existent, *i. e.*, the universe of individual creatures, and the non-existent, undeveloped, formless matter, are denied. Thus in the beginning there was nothing at all. Then, suddenly,

something stirred. But what was that something? Where was it? Who watched and protected its origin and its development? The poet's answer is a fresh question, "Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?" Indeed Dahlmann, for instance, believes that these waters, this depth, which reminds us of Gen. i, 2 and Ps. civ, 6, must be considered as primordial matter, and that from this passage the idea of *Prakriti*, the material cause of the universe, was obtained. Whether the "One Thing" in v. 2 is identical with this watery matter, or must be understood as a principle, similar to the Brahman, remains doubtful. Probably it is the latter. In this case, the principle of existence and of development would be joined to primordial matter, which is identical with the non-existent. For it did stir, it did develop. The "One Thing", indeed, is quiet, *i. e.*, unmoved by wind or any cause outside itself. But it breathed by its own nature; it breathed, that is, it lived. In v. 3 the poet leads us back again into that dark, terrible abyss, where there was darkness wrapped in darkness, and all that existed then was void and formless; so little does that watery primordial matter deserve to be considered as existent. Then suddenly the "One Thing" springs into existence "by the great power of Warmth". Then in the "One Thing" desire arises. A similar idea occurs in Schiller's poems:

Friendless was this great world's great Creator,  
Longed for friends and thus created spirits,  
Stainless mirrors of his holiness.

Wise men by their research have recognised this desire to be the kinship, or the connecting link, between the existent and the non-existent. Through desire, therefore, the existent grew out of the non-existent. This is the same abstraction as Schopenhauer's "will to live". The fifth verse, especially the "severing line", is obscure, and he who is supposed to have drawn it. The second half of the verse also may be interpreted in different ways. The poet seems to see mighty, creative forces before him: "Free action here and energy up

yonder." Does the poet think that the creative forces were put into the surging primordial waters by "the witness in highest heaven" (v. 7)? It may also be that he alludes to a conjugal union between heaven and earth. The whole hymn ends in doubting questions concerning the origin of creation and creatures. As the gods did not come till after creation, they cannot furnish an answer to the question. For us it is also uncertain whom the poet means by the witness in heaven: the primeval spirit *Purusha*? or *Īśvara*, the first personification of the Brahman? or is the idea of the one Creator-God, who might be Varuṇa, dawning upon the poet? Perhaps he himself was not sure of it. At least he is doubtful whether or no this "witness" may answer the question concerning the origin of the universe. How much more doubtful must it have been to him, whether this witness may have been the Creator himself? So this poet-philosopher cannot attain to a satisfactory conception of the creation of the world.

### THE PURUSHA SŪKTA.

The author of the Purusha Sūkta proclaims his wisdom concerning the origin of creation with much more self-assurance, and his wisdom includes at the same time important details of the process of creation, and is moreover combined with the idea of a sacrifice:

- 6 When Gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusha as their offering,  
Its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn; summer was the wood.
- 7 They balm'd as victim on the grass Purusha born in earliest time.  
With him the Deities and all Sādhyas and Ṛishis sacrificed.
- 8 From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up.  
He formed the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and tame.
- 9 From that great general sacrifice Ṛichas and Sāma-hymns were born.  
Therefrom were spells and charms produced; the Yajus had its birth from it.
- 10 From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth;  
From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.

- 11 When they divided Purusha, how many portions did they make? [feet?  
What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and
- 12 The Brāhman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rājanya made.  
His thighs became the Vaiśya, from his feet the Śūdra was produced.
- 13 The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth;  
Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vāyu from his breath.
- 14 Forth from his navel came mid-air; the sky was fashioned from his head;  
Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions. Thus they formed the  
[worlds.
- 15 Seven fencing-sticks had he, thrice seven layers of fuel were prepared,  
When the Gods, offering sacrifice, bound as their victim Purusha.
- 16 Gods, sacrificing, sacrificed the victim:  
these were the earliest holy ordinances.  
The Mighty Ones attained the height of heaven,  
there where the Sādhyas, Gods of old, are dwelling.

*Rig. X, 90, 6—16.*

The account of the process of creation is here enclosed by the description of a sacrifice of cosmic significance, through which the gods consecrated, *i.e.*, established sacrifices, and themselves obtained heaven (v.16). Part of the description of the development of the primeval Spirit into the universe we have considered before (see p. 86 *f.*). The primeval Spirit divides himself into four parts, three of which go upwards and are changed into the world of the Immortals, whereas one-fourth develops here below into the creatures of the earth. Here the author causes the animals, the whole of Vedic lore, and finally mankind arranged in four castes, to emanate from Purusha, who in v. 12 seems to present himself again in his full shape. The four castes are called, 1, Brāhmaṇa, *i.e.*, the man of prayer, who is in possession of Vedic knowledge, the priest; 2, Rājanya, later called Kshatriya, the princely warrior; 3, Vaiśya, the man of the people, the free farmer and tradesman; 4, the Śūdra, the slave or serf of the conquered aborigines. Finally the poet makes heaven and earth and what is in them; even gods like Indra, Agni, Vāyu, proceed from Purusha. Thus the gods are here involved in the process of creation. Strictly speaking this process is

not creation proper, but cosmogony, an emanation of all creatures out of the Supreme Being named Purusha.

With the confused ideas of these cosmogonies the simple order of the Biblical account of creation should be compared. It would be a hopeless attempt, if we were to try, to make the ideas about the origin of the world, which we have communicated here, agree with each other, or even to arrange them in their natural order. On the one hand we have a personal Creator and several others beside him; on the other hand there is an unnamed something, the One, a principle of existence and evolution. Here there are powers generating and giving birth, which are supposed to have produced creation; and there the gods are represented as having created the universe, and yet they themselves have only come into existence in the process of creation. We readily understand why the sages of a later period turned away from such confused conceptions, and taking hold of the idea of existence and non-existence with it constructed a new and more satisfactory edifice of wisdom and spiritual knowledge.

### PRESERVATION.

In the Vedic texts there are no direct statements concerning the preservation and the government of the world. But indirectly these functions are ascribed to the different individual gods. If Varuṇa is described as a great ruler, who governs the world according to unchangeable laws, rewarding those that are obedient to his laws, and punishing those that violate them, such government can have its object only in the preservation of the universe. Likewise in every hymn which prays for gifts and blessings from the gods and ascribes beneficial actions to them, the belief is implied that the gods stand above the powers of nature, that they govern the world and protect it from evil and destructive powers. Without this belief prayer to the gods would be impossible. But it would be in vain to look in the hymns for deeper thoughts, or the

comprehension of the mysteries connected with the belief in God's government of the universe.

In later times, if we may anticipate, the idea of the preservation of the world occurs in connection with the incarnations (*avatāra* = descent) of Viṣṇu. This idea finds its classical expression in Bhagavadgītā iv, 7. 8:

Whenever, O Bharata, good custom languishes and evil custom increases, I create myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers and for the restoration of good custom I am born in every age.

It is Kṛishṇa, the manifestation of the Supreme Being, who speaks here. It is therefore the Supreme Being, the Brahman, which, according to this doctrine, produces itself in the world as a visible being, in order to restore the languishing moral order of the universe, by exterminating the evil-doers and by saving and protecting the good. There are altogether ten such *Avatāras*, the first four of which took place in the first age (*kṛitayuga*), the next three in the second (*tretāyuga*), the next — the eighth — in the third (*dvāparayuga*), the ninth in the present age (*kaliyuga*), whereas the tenth and last is to take place in the future. They all have for their object the preservation of the world, but as they belong to mythologic Hinduism, we cannot here enter into detail. They are in no way connected with the idea of liberation or salvation, the *summum bonum* of Brahmanism. This doctrine is made up of conceptions which are quite unsuitable for application to the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. There are partial and complete incarnations; the manifestations of the Supreme Being are sometimes animals; and when they are human beings like Rāma and Kṛishṇa, they are explicitly stated to be illusory men (*māyāpurusha*), therefore products of the union of the Brahman with Avidyā. It is repugnant to every true Christian to compare the Lord Jesus Christ with such animal or illusive incarnations. Only the last *Avatāra*, named Kalki, who comes from heaven on a white horse, with his sword drawn, recalls the picture of Christ coming to judgement, in Revelation xix, 11—16. But apart from this, the *Avatāras*



have for their object the preservation of the physical universe and its moral order, and have no connection with the liberation of the soul.

## 2. THE COSMOGONIC SPECULATIONS OF THE UPANISHADS.

### ORIGIN OF THE WORLD FROM BRAHMAN.

The sages of the Upanishads take up the thread of cosmogonic speculation, culling from the later Vedic hymns the ideas of Purusha, Hiranyagarbha, also occasionally of Prajāpati, and evolving the idea of Ātman-Brahman from them, and from this the material universe with its individual creatures. We must remember that in the Upanishads Ātman-Brahman is the only really existing thing. Often it is also called the cause, the womb (*yoni*) of all existing things, but without an accurate distinction between the material (*upādāna*) and the efficient (*nimitta*) cause, which we find later in the Vedānta proper. We must remember from the description of the Brahman that it is often simply identified with the world and that the sages assert there is really nothing but this one Being. But afterwards the origin of the universe is derived from this Brahman. The following passages from one of the earliest Upanishads bear a close affinity with certain passages of the hymns quoted and also with some Brāhmaṇa texts:

The existent only was in the beginning, one only, without a second. It thought, May I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth fire. That fire thought, May I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth water. And therefore, whenever anybody is hot and perspires, water is produced on him from fire alone. Water thought, May I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth earth (food). Therefore, whenever it rains anywhere, most food is then produced. From water alone is eatable food produced.—Of all living things there are indeed three origins only, that which springs from an egg, that which springs from a living being, and that which springs from a germ. That deity (*Prajāpati* according to the commentator) thought, “Let me now enter those

three gods (fire, water, earth) with this living Self (the individual Self) and let me separate according to name and form. I will make each of these threefold!" Thus that deity entered with the living Self into these three deities, and separated them according to name and form. Each of them it made threefold.

*Chāndogya Up. VI, 2, 2—4; 3, 1—3.*

The pure being of the Brahman has here suddenly been made a mythological person: it considers by itself, and produces out of itself fire; this produces water, and water produces food, a process which is here illustrated by examples taken from daily experience. These three elements likewise are immediately conceived as deities, whereupon the author represents the absolute Spirit, in the shape of a personal deity, *Prajāpati*, as resolving to enter into those three gods, and, by adopting names and forms, to differentiate itself into different individual beings. Name (*nāman*) and form (*rūpa*) is the constant expression for "individual existence", as it appears in individual creatures and receives its separate appellations in language. Compare Śāthapatha Brāhmaṇa XI, 2, 3, 1 ff.:

In the beginning Brahman was this universe.... Having created gods he placed them in these worlds.... Then Brahman proceeded to the higher sphere. Having gone to the higher sphere he considered, "How can I pervade all these worlds?" He then pervaded them with two things, with form and name. Whatever has a name, that is name. And then that which has no name—that which he knows by its form, that such is its form—that is form. The universe is so much as is form and name. These are the two magnitudes of Brahman.<sup>1</sup>

Name and form are, according to this passage, the two great principles, by which the Brahman pervades the material world, and differentiates itself into the innumerable multitude of individual beings. They comprise the whole universe. Both have sprung from the reflection, or the cogitation of the Brahman, which indicates that they are mere abstractions, to which, however, a very real existence is ascribed here.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Dr. J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V, p. 388 f.

EMANATION = *Vivartavāda*.

Thus the world had its origin from the Brahman and for this reason is identical with it, continuing moreover to have its existence in the Brahman. This is, at least according to the traditional interpretation, stated in brief and pithy words in Chhānd. Up. III, 14, 1:

*Sarvam khalvidam brahma tajjalāniti śānta upāsītā* = Truly this all is Brahman; it arises out of it, it is dissolved into it, it breathes in it. Let him who has his passions allayed worship it with this thought.

*Tajjalān* is an almost impossible compound, and Dr. Böthlingk<sup>1</sup> suggests the following emendation: *tajjānāniti*. Then the translation would be: "Let him who has his passions allayed worship it with the desire, 'May I know that'." From the standpoint of the scholar we should prefer this reading as the only correct one; but it is not likely to meet with general recognition in India. And as the traditional reading, although very questionable from a critical point of view, according to the above interpretation yields a meaning which agrees with the doctrine of the Upanishads, we should like to retain it for our purpose. It says that the universe, having arisen from the Brahman, is identical with it, will again be dissolved in it, and meanwhile breathes, that is, lives and has its existence in it. Thus the identity of the individual Self with the absolute Self is not explained by means of the doctrine of *Māyā*, but by the idea of emanation (*vivartavāda*).

The origin of the world out of the Brahman is described by various figures, all of which have the same idea, *viz.*, that of emanation, at their foundation.

As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow upon the earth, as from man hair issues on the head and the body, thus everything issues from the Imperishable. *Muṇḍaka Up. I, 1, 7*.

And further we read in the same work:

<sup>1</sup> Chhāndogya Upanishad, kritisch herausgegeben und übersetzt von O. B.

This is the truth. As from a blazing fire sparks, being like unto fire, fly a thousand fold, thus are various beings brought forth from the Imperishable, and return thither also. That heavenly Person is without body, he is both without and within, not produced, without breath, and without mind, pure, higher than the high, Imperishable. From him, when entering on creation, is born breath, mind, and all organs of sense, ether, air, light, water, and the earth, the support of all. Fire (the sky) is his head, his eyes the sun and the moon, the quarters his ears, his speech the Vedas disclosed, the wind his breath, his heart the universe; from his feet came the earth; he is indeed the inner Self of all things . . . . . This primeval Spirit is the universe, sacrifice, penance, Brahman, the highest immortality. He who knoweth this being hidden in the innermost, he, my friend, does even here dissolve the knot of ignorance. *Mund. Up. II, 1, 1—4. 10.*

These passages contain several allusions to the Purusha Sūkta; from it the author receives the idea of the Purusha, which he identifies with the Brahman (v. 10). This Purusha is also identified with the universe, and yet all its parts have been born from Purusha. Probably the latter feature is the meaning of this identification. And finally in v. 1 the absolute Spirit is doubtless "the Imperishable", and in the following verse he stands high above the Imperishable. According to Max Müller the Imperishable (*akshara*) is on the one hand the supreme absolute Brahman itself, and on the other hand its first personification, Īśvara, the creator of the world. The Vedāntists assume it means the Avidyā, or Māyā, which in later works, just as the Prakṛiti of the Sāṅkhya school, is also named the Imperishable. Here it seems much more natural with Max Müller to understand the Imperishable as meaning the Brahman itself, so that also according to this passage the world emanates from the Brahman. The same idea of emanation is very beautifully and characteristically expressed in the following passage:

This holy fig-tree stands for ever with its roots upwards and its branches downwards. This, truly, is the Pure, this is the Brahman, this, truly, is called immortality. On this all these worlds rest, and nobody may rise beyond it. This (the universe) is really that (the Brahman). This universe, whatever it may be, when created, moves in the vital breath. It is terrible, a flash of lightning; they who know it obtain immortality. In awe of it the Fire burns; in awe of it the Sun pours forth its heat; in awe of it Indra and Vāyu wander, and also Death as a fifth companion. *Kaṭh. Up. VI, 1.*

The universe here is first compared to the sacred fig-tree (*ficus religiosa*), not to the so-called Indian fig-tree (*ficus Indica*), whose branches descend as roots into the earth. Professor Deussen<sup>1</sup> erroneously supposes the latter and thinks that the simile suggests metempsychosis. In reality the simile only conveys the idea of a fig-tree, which grows upside down, the roots upwards and the branches downwards; for the world has its roots, that is, its cause and origin, above, in the highest Brahman. For this very reason, and because these different worlds rest in the Brahman, *i. e.*, have their existence in it, the world is immediately identified with the absolute Brahman, which is immortality. "This (the universe) is that (the Brahman)." Whatever belongs to the universe moves in the "vital breath," which likewise means the Brahman, for it is the vital breath or the principle of individual life (*prāṇa*) in all living creatures. The poet and with him the gods Agni (fire), Sūrya (the sun), Indra (the god of thunder), Vāyu (the wind), and, as their fifth companion, Death, stand in awe before this mystery, which is terrible like a flash of lightning. This accounts for the motions of the forces of nature represented by these gods, the burning of fire, the shining of the sun, the roaring of the thunderstorm, and the howling of the wind. In all these processes, and even in the death of living creatures, the Brahman is at work. All is still emanation, and no trace of the illusion-theory (*māyāvāda*) is to be found here. On the contrary, this passage rests on the idea of two Brahmans, one of which, the Supreme Brahman, continues in the state of pure existence, whereas the other is identical with the universe, which has arisen or emanated from the former. This appears clearly from the following passage:

The Brahman grows through austerities; from it arises food (matter), from food breath, thought, truth, the worlds, and immortality in works. He who is all-wise and all-knowing, from him this Brahman was evolved, name, form, and food. *Muṇḍ. Up. I, 8. 9.*

The important thing here is the fact that two Brahman are distinguished. One is all-wise and all-knowing; the heat of its austerities is pure wisdom. This is the highest Brahman, which grew *i. e.*, developed by the heat of its own austerities. From it was evolved "this Brahman", that is, the universe, which is identical with the lower Brahman, because it was evolved from that higher Brahman as name, form, and food, the latter probably here meaning gross matter.

In the following passage we see the process of emanation develop in wild confusion out of the primeval Spirit:

Out of him the fire, whose fuel is the sun, out of the moon Parjanya (the god of rain), out of him the herbs of the earth were born; thus out of Purusha many creatures were born. The R̥g-, the Sāma-, and the Yajur-Veda, the initiatory rites, the sacrifices and all sacred performances, the fees of the priests, the year, the sacrificer, the worlds where the moon and sun shine, the numerous gods are born from him, Sādhyas and men, beasts and fowls, inhalation and exhalation, barley and rice, penance, faith, and truth, abstinence and fate. From him arise the seven vital breaths, fire-wood, seven flames, seven sacrifices, the seven spheres where in a cave the breaths of life are wandering by sevens. The oceans spring from him and all the hills; from him manifold rivers stream forth. From him spring the plants together with their juice, through which the inner Self remains with living beings. This universe is Purusha, the sacred works, penance, prayer and lofty immortality. He who knows this Self hidden in the cave will even here below dissolve the knot of infatuation.

*Mund. Up. II, 1, 5-10.*

Purusha is here identified by the commentator with Īśvara or Hiranyagarbha. But it is very questionable, whether this was the meaning intended by the author. He seems to identify Purusha with the highest Brahman; and then he derives from it the whole world of creatures as a second Brahman, whereupon he identifies this world with Purusha. Thus all kinds of things, even gods and men, are supposed to emanate from the highest Brahman, nay even things which according to our ideas need not be created, as ritual performances, confidence, truth, abstinence, and even fate. It would be useless to try and arrange this host of creatures in due order. The idea is noteworthy, that the inner Self, the Brahman, remains in the

creatures by means of the juice of plants, and is thus their real principle of life.

The idea of the evolution of the universe out of the Brahman is somewhat differently stated in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* which belongs to the most ancient of this class of writings. But the statements of this work agree in the general idea that the universe was evolved from the Brahman and is therefore identical with it.

A Self was this universe in the beginning in the shape of a person. He, looking round, saw nothing but his own Self. He said in the beginning, "This is I", and of that sprang the word... He was afraid. Therefore the lone one is afraid. He reflected, "As there is nothing beside me, of what then should I be afraid?" Thus his fear disappeared. Of what should he be afraid? Or is there fear, if there is no second? He had no pleasure. Therefore the lone one has no pleasure. He wished for a Second. He was like woman and man who hold each other in embrace. He divided himself into two parts. Of these came husband and wife... He united himself with her. Then men were born. He reflected, "How does now the world spring out of myself? Well, I will disappear." Then One became a cow and the other a bull. He approached her; then cows were born.—*Bṛihadār. Up. I, 4, 1—4.*

In the same way horses, asses, goats and sheep came into existence.

And so he created everything that is in pairs, down to the ants. He thought, "Truly, I am this creation, for I have created all this." Thus he became this creation. And he who knows this lives in this creation.—*I, 4, 4. 5.*

We see, even the idea of the man - woman, which we find in Plato, and which by cabalists and theosophists has been read into Gen. II, 18—25, was anticipated by the sages of the *Upanishads*. But the Self "in the likeness of a man" is according to this passage the All, because he created it or literally "made it emanate out of himself". Therefore true existence belongs to individual creatures only, because the highest, absolute Self is in them:

This All was then undeveloped. It became developed in form and name, so that one could say, "This so and so is so and so..." He entered into this world even to the tips of the nails. As the razor is hidden in a razor-case, as the all-preserving fire in a fire-place, even so one cannot see him, for he is incomplete (in every individual being). As he breatheth, he is called the breath

of life; as he speaketh, speech; as he seeth, eye; as he heareth, ear; as he thinketh, mind. These are his functions. Who, therefore, worships him in one of these functions does not know him. For he is incomplete, if he only appears in an individual being. Let him be worshipped as Self, for therein all individual beings are united. *Bṛihadār. Up. I, 4, 7.*

Thus here these two statements stand side by side, *viz.*, that individual things have sprung from the Brahman, and that they are one with it. Because they have their origin from the Brahman, this absolute Self is their true existence. But here, too, there is no suggestion that the world, as the creation of ignorance, is illusory.

### THE FIVE SELVES.

In the later Upanishads we notice the attempt to bring the traditional ideas of the evolution of individual beings out of the Brahman into something like systematic order, and to explain the whole by means of the ideas of Prakṛiti and Māyā, ideas that were then in course of formation. The following passage, strange to say, speaks of five Selves, whereas otherwise only four conditions of the Brahman are known. These five Selves, moreover, have arisen from the Brahman only by means of the so-called elements (*pañchabhūtāni*), and are represented in the shape of a bird. We must probably consider this bird as a swan or a flamingo, which also elsewhere represents the individual Self.

Om! He who knows the Brahman attains the highest. To this relates the following verse: "Truth, wisdom, infinite is the Brahman. He who knows this which lies hidden in the cave of the heart of the highest ether, he obtains all his wishes, together with the omniscient Brahman." From this, truly, from this Self, hath sprung ether, from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth, from earth plants, from plants food, from food seed, from seed man. This is that very man that consists of the juice of plants. This here is his head, this his right wing, this his left wing; this is his body, this his tail, that his support. To this relates the following verse: "Yea, from food spring creatures, everything that hath the earth for its dwelling-place; and by food they preserve their life, to food they return again in the end. Food is the oldest of creatures, wherefore it is called the panacea. Those, truly, obtain



all food, who honour food as the Brahman. Food is the oldest of creatures, wherefore it is called the panacea. Creatures come out of food, and having come out of food they thrive. It is consumed, and it consumes the creatures, and that is just the reason why it is called food.

Different from this, which consists of food, is the inner Self, which consists of the breath of life. That is filled by this. It is quite in the likeness of a man. As that Self has the likeness of a man, so also this Self has the shape of a man. The breath of life going upward is his head, the breath of life going backward is his right wing, the breath of life going downward is his left wing; the ether his body, the earth his tail, his support. To this relates the following verse (2): "The gods breathe after the breath of life, so do men, so do beasts. The breath of life is the life of creatures, wherefore it is called the all-vivifier. They obtain their full age who worship Brahman as the breath of life. The breath of life is the life of creatures, wherefore it is called the all-vivifier." The embodied Self of this (consisting of the breath of life) is the same as that of the former (consisting of food).

Different from this, consisting of the breath of life, is the inner Self, which consists of the inner sense (the mind). That is full of this. It has quite the shape of a man. As that has the shape of a man, so this also has the shape of a man. His head is the Yajurveda, the R̥gveda his right wing, the Sāmaveda his left wing; the doctrine (of the Brāhmaṇas) is his body, the poets of the Atharvaveda are his tail, his support. To this relates the following verse (3): "He who knows it, the joyful bliss of the Brahman, from which words, together with the inner sense, turn back, because they do not reach it, he is free from fear for ever." The embodied Self of this (consisting of the inner sense) is the same as that of the former (consisting of the breath of life).

Different from this, consisting of the inner sense, is the inner Self, consisting of knowledge. That is full of this. This has quite the shape of a man. As that has the shape of a man, so this also has the shape of a man. His head is faith, righteousness is his right wing, truth his left wing, absorption his body, the great being (Īśvara) his tail, his support. To this relates the following verse (4): "It is knowledge that performs the sacrifices, knowledge that performs the sacred works; all the gods worship knowledge as Brahman, as the oldest. If any one knows knowledge as Brahman, and if he does not turn away from it, he, even while in the body, strips off all evils, and all his wishes he sees fulfilled." The embodied Self of this (consisting of knowledge) is the same as that of the former (consisting of the inner sense).

But different from this, consisting of knowledge, is the inner Self, consisting of bliss. That is full of this. This has quite the shape of a man. As that has the shape of a man, so this also has the shape of a man. His head is love, his right wing is pleasure, his left wing joy, bliss his body, the Brahman his tail, his support. To this relates the following verse (5): "He who knows the Brahman as the non-existent must truly himself become non-existent. But he who knows the Brahman as the existent may by this be known as himself existent." The embodied Self of this (consisting of bliss) is the same as that of the former (consisting of knowledge). Hence follow the questions: Does anyone without knowledge go to that world having departed from hence? Or

does he who has knowledge attain to that world, when he departs from hence? It wished, "I should like to multiply myself, to propagate myself." It performed austerities. Having performed austerities it created all this universe, all that exists. Having created this, it entered into it. Having entered into it, it became this real, this unknown, the manifest and the non-manifest, that which has a dwelling place and that which has no dwelling place, the knowing and the non-knowing, the true and the untrue. The truly-existent became all this which exists. Therefore the Brahman is called the truly-existent. To this relates the following verse (6): "Non-existent, indeed, was this in the beginning, and from it the existent was born. This, through itself, indeed created itself, wherefore it is called the self-created."—*Taittirīyaka Up. II, 1.*

What we are concerned with in this passage is that the five elements—ether, air, fire, water, earth—emanate from the Brahman directly, without an intermediate cause. The Vedānta commentators, indeed, interpose Māyā, the product of Avidyā, between Brahman and ether, but in the context neither Māyā nor Prakṛiti is mentioned. The author then makes the plants spring from the earth, from them food, from food seed, and from seed man, *i. e.*, a personal being, which however, as in Śvetāśvatara Up. I, 6, is represented as a bird. Further, it is remarkable that the author knows five Selves, one being encased in the other, which, in order from without, consist of food, breath of life, inner sense (mind), knowledge, and bliss. These five Selves correspond exactly to the five sheaths (*kośa*) which according to the later Vedānta wrap up the inner Self as its organism, through which it becomes the individual Self. As such we shall also have to consider the five Selves here. The embodied Self, the Self which is wrapped up in the sheaths and therefore lives in the body, is always the same, whereas those five Selves inclosed in one another are different from each other. This can only mean that these five Selves are really only sheaths, enclosing one and the same inner Self, so that the absolute Self, the Brahman, becomes the individual Self connected with the material world, *i. e.*, man. Thus we have in this passage two lines of emanation, a material, physical line, and an intellectual, personal line. Both are, however, linked together in food, from which the evolution of the personal springs forth.

Finally, it is to be observed that the farther we penetrate towards the innermost, the more the Selves approach the absolute Self. The tail, that on which each of these Selves is supported, is by turns the Earth, the Atharvaveda, the Great Being, the Brahman; thus they become by degrees more and more spiritual. In the Great Being, which is probably Īśvara, the support approaches very nearly the origin of all things, till it is finally identified with the highest Brahman. Thus the process of emanation at last returns to the Supreme Brahman, from which it has proceeded. The great importance of the passage lies in the fact that it contains a statement of the origin and the nature of the individual Self, *i.e.*, man. Apparently it unites the highest psychological idealism with pure psychological materialism, for it makes the human Self emanate from food. But food has, as we have seen, really come from the Brahman and is therefore homogeneous with it. We shall have to explain the apparent inconsistency in the following way: the essence of the absolute Self is enveloped in the medium of matter and breaks forth again from it. This is also suggested by the conclusion of the passage, where the Brahman is once more said to be the source and the innermost essence of all existence. The doctrine of identity is here already announced, but it is not yet clearly stated, neither is it accounted for by anything else but the evolution of all creatures from the Brahman.

In the same Upanishad the bliss of the liberated souls is described as having different degrees, which, as Max Müller observes, show the scale of creatures, of personal spirits, as it appeared to the vision of the sages of that time. According to that description, the world of personal beings shows itself in the following way: 1, men, human *gandharvas* (= demigods) and scribes; 2, divine, that is, heavenly *gandharvas* and scribes; 3, the fathers in the long-existing world; 4, gods by birth (*ājānājadevāḥ*); 5, gods by merit (*karmadevāḥ*); 6, the gods, *i.e.*, the 33 gods (a definite number); 7, Indra; 8, Bṛihaspati; 9, Prajāpati; 10, Brahman.

If we were to try to arrange these ten grades within the four conditions of the absolute Self, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades would probably belong to the first condition (Jīva, Vaiśvānara), the 4th, 5th and 6th to the second (Taijasa, Hiranyagarbha-Sūtrātman), the 7th, 8th and 9th to the third (Īśvara), whereas the 10th grade would represent the fourth condition.

### MĀYĀ AS INTERMEDIATE CAUSE.

In the following passage Māyā already appears as the intermediate cause between Brahman and the world of creatures:

The Brahma students say: Is Brahman the cause? Whence were we born? Upon what do we live? Where have we our support? By whose guidance do we wander, ye knowers of Brahman, through pain and pleasure, to ever new births?(1). Are time, nature, fate, chance, the elements, the primeval Spirit to be considered as the womb (cause)? It cannot be their union either, for this has no existence in itself. Neither has the Self any power over the cause of pain and pleasure (2). They, who devote themselves to meditation and pious concentration, have beheld God's own power, hidden in its own components. He alone superintends all those causes, time, the Self, and the rest (3). We meditate on him, who has one felly, three tires, sixteen ends, fifty spokes with twenty counter-spokes, together with six sets of eight; whose only rope is many-fold, who walks on three different ways, and whose only delusion has two causes (4). *Śvetāśvatara Up. I, 1—4.*

The questions in vv. 1 and 2 must, according to the views of the author, be answered in the negative. To him even the Brahman is not the immediate cause of the world, neither is it Purusha (Rig. x, 90). It is not quite clear, what the author means by Purusha, whether he means the Brahman in its pure condition, or in the state of waking consciousness, as the aggregate of individual souls. It is also doubtful what the author means by the Self at the end of v. 2. Śāṅkara understands it to mean the individual soul; others think it must mean the absolute Self. Śāṅkara is probably right here, and then Purusha perhaps means Īśvara or Hiranyagarbha. With these negations the author has made room for his own universal cause, which he names in v. 3. It is "God's own power, or

self-power (*devātmaśakti*) hidden in its components.” The god is here Īśvara, the creator, the Brahman in the condition of dreamless sleep. He has his “own power”. It is in this power, hidden within its components, that the Sāṅkhya school finds its Prakṛiti or Pradhāna mentioned, the first or most eminent being. The Vedāntists, however, explain it as Avidyā, ignorance. Perhaps both are right; for this creative cause of the universe is not described here in such definite language as would prevent its being explained either way. This hidden, secret power is enclosed within its own components (*svagūṇa*). This is a term of the Sāṅkhya school, for according to it Prakṛiti exists and is active in its three components (*guṇa*). But the Vedānta school has also appropriated the idea of the guṇas. In v. 4 Īśvara is compared to a wheel whose felly probably means the visible world, whereas the three tires are supposed to mean the three components: *sattva* = light, joy, and goodness; *rajas* = gloom, pain, and passion; *tamas* = darkness, indifference, and vice. The meaning of the other numbers is doubtful. The “only rope” is explained as the desire for earthly enjoyment; the threefold path as justice, injustice, and knowledge; the two causes of delusion are supposed to mean good and bad works; and delusion itself is supposed to be ignorance of the true Self. This is identified by the Vedāntists with Māyā, *i.e.*, cosmic illusion.

### MĀYĀVĀDA OR PARINĀMAVĀDA?

We have now reached a point where the question arises whether or no the Upanishads contain the idea of Māyā as understood by the Vedānta school. In this the further question is involved whether the view of the Upanishads concerning the origin of the world is Māyāvāda, or Vivartavāda, or Parināmavāda. Māyāvāda is the theory which considers the whole visible world as absolute illusion, as the products of ignorance (*avidyā*), similar to a *fata morgana* in the desert. Vivartavāda really means evolution, but it is supposed to mean only an

illusory evolution of the Brahman into the multifarious world of individual beings, which has no reality, wherefore Vivartavāda means nearly the same thing as Māyāvāda. Parīṇāmavāda is the theory which assumes a real change in the nature of the Brahman, its transmutation into the things of the world of creatures. But the innermost essence of the Brahman itself would remain untouched by this change. The Brahman, then, without fully exhausting its own nature, would be the material cause (*upādāna*) of the world, and the latter, therefore, not mere illusion, but actual reality.

According to Colebrooke,<sup>1</sup> "the notion that the versatile world is an illusion (*māyā*) . . . does not appear to be the doctrine of the text of the Vedānta". He finds it only in the minor Vedāntist commentaries and elementary treatises, not even in the commentaries of Śaṅkara: "The doctrine of the early Vedānta is complete and consistent, without this graft of a later growth." So far as Śaṅkara is concerned, this assertion is doubtless incorrect. Śaṅkara is Māyāvādin in principle, although he cannot always maintain his theory. But apart from Śaṅkara, Colebrooke is quite right in his assertion. The editor of Colebrooke's essays, Professor Cowell, observes with regard to this: "The fact can hardly be called in question that the original Vedānta of the earlier Upanishads and the Sūtras did not know the doctrine of Māyā. The earliest school seems to have considered the Brahman as the material cause of the world, and that in the realist meaning of the word." Major Jacob from whose work on the Vedāntasāra<sup>2</sup> we have taken this quotation, agrees with this assertion. He observes: "The authors of the earlier Upanishads were doubtless Parīṇāmavādins and believed in the reality of the world of perception. To them the Brahman was not a mere substratum or the merely imagined material cause of the same, but the matter out of which the world has developed and

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellaneous Essays*, I, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 6 and 8.

shaped itself, as the web from the spider, froth from water, curds from milk."

The passages quoted from the Upanishads fully agree with this view. It is, however, not shared by scholars like Gough,<sup>1</sup> with whom also Max Müller agrees.<sup>2</sup> Gough finds the idea of *Māyā* already in the *Nāsadiya Sūkta*, *Rig.* x, 129, whose beginning he translates: "It was not entity, nor was it non-entity", and then he declares, in accordance with the ancient commentator *Sāyaṇa*, that this not existent and not non-existent being was *Māyā*, in which an earlier world had been withdrawn and from which a new world had not yet issued. The text, however, does not in the least suggest all this. But to Gough it follows from it that in the Upanishads the conception of *Māyā* must be used as a means of explanation, even where the context contains no allusion to it. He asserts that with regard to his doctrine of *Māyā*, which he everywhere reads into the Upanishads, *Śāṅkara* was in possession, wherefore he believes that "the burden of proof lies with those who assert that the tenet of *Māyā* is an innovation on the primitive philosophy of the Upanishads". The thing is, however, not so simple. *Śāṅkara* lived about 1500 years after the time of the earlier Upanishads. Between both lies the development of the *Sāṅkhya*, the *Vedānta*, and other philosophic schools. It is, therefore, rather doubtful whether *Śāṅkara* possessed a historically authentic standard of interpretation. Nor can *Sāyaṇa* be considered as an absolutely infallible standard. Gough, therefore, finds himself under the necessity of himself furnishing an exegetical proof for his assertion. This being the only way of clearing up the point, we shall accompany him on his course.

His first quotation is from *Bṛihadāranyaka Up.* II, 5, 19:

In every figure he hath been the model :

this is his only form for us to look on.

Indra moves multiform by his illusions,

for his Ray Steeds are yoked ten times a hundred.

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 235 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, XV. *The Upanishads*, p. xxxv.

This (Self) is the horses; this is the ten (organs of sense and motion); this is the many thousands, the innumerable (living souls). This same Self has nothing before it or after it, nothing inside it or outside it. This Self is Brahman and omniscient. Such is the doctrine.

The verse at the beginning is taken from Ṛig. vi, 47, 18. What here is rendered by illusions is the word *māyā* in the plural. It is a fact that in the Ṛigveda the word does not yet mean cosmic illusion, but supernatural art, divine wisdom, divine power. The plural form is also quite opposed to the meaning of "cosmic illusion". For according to Vedānta views there are not many illusions but only one. Nor is there any suggestion that the author of the Upanishad passage might have found the cosmic illusion in the Veda passage. It seems to be attempting too much to try to base an historical proof on so doubtful an expression.

Gough fares no better with the rest of his quotations<sup>1</sup>, for instance, Bṛihadār. Up. iv, 3, 7 :

"What Self is that?" asked the prince. (Yājñavalkya): "It is this conscious soul amidst the vital airs, the light within the heart. This Self, one and the same in every mind and every body, passes through this life and the next life in the body, and seems to think, and seems to move."

The text of this passage does not contain the slightest allusion to *Māyā*. Gough probably finds *Māyā* used in the glosses of the commentators for the explanation of the passage. Of course, nobody denies the fact that the Vedānta commentators of the Upanishads were *Māyāvādins*. But Gough ought to see that they indulge in dogmatic interpretation, *i. e.*, that they read the notions of the later Vedānta school into the yet rather indefinite sayings of the Upanishads. It is, however, the function of the scholar to distinguish between the earlier ideas and their later growth, and thus to trace the historical evolution of these ideas.

We may consider one more of the passages quoted by Gough, which necessarily leads to *Pariṇāmavāda*, *i. e.*, to the idea that the Brahman is the material cause of the world.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p.242 ff. The quotations are in Gough's own translation.



As everything made of clay is known by a single lump of clay, being nothing more than a modification of speech, a change, a name, while the clay is the only truth: As everything made of gold is known by a single lump of gold, being nothing more than a modification of speech, a change, a name, while the gold is the only truth: As everything made of steel is known by a single pair of nail-scissors, being nothing more than a modification of speech, a change, a name, while the steel is the only truth. Such, my son, is that instruction. *Chhând. Up. VI, 1, 4—6.*

The subject here is the knowledge of the Brahman. What the author of the Upanishad adduces are not mere similes, but analogies with a deeper meaning. According to the notions of the author the Brahman is the clay, the gold, the steel, in short, the material of which different things are made. The Brahman, therefore, is without doubt the material cause of the world and the world is of the same substance as the Brahman. Gough lays great stress on the fact that the different things are said to be mere modifications, mere changes, mere names of the Brahman. But the doctrine, that these modifications and changes belong to the sphere of *Mâyā* and are the effect of *Avidyā*, Gough cannot get from the Upanishad text, but he takes it from the glosses of the Vedānta commentators. Gough is fortunate enough to find not *Mâyā* indeed, but *Avidyā* in the following passage:

They that are infatuated, dwelling in the midst of the illusion, wise in their own eyes, and learned in their own conceit, are stricken with repeated plagues, and go round and round, like blind men led by the blind. *Kāth. Up. I, 2, 5.*

What Gough renders as "the illusion" is really not *Mâyā*, but *Avidyā*, and the context would suggest that here *Avidyā* simply means ignorance concerning the Brahman, and not yet the cosmic principle of illusion. But even if the word had already acquired its later meaning, it could not be taken as a synonym for *Mâyā*. On the contrary, *Mâyā* is the product of *Avidyā*. At all events only the later Vedāntists have effected the equation: *Mâyā* = *Avidyā*. Gough is no more fortunate in his attempt to interpret the terms *avyakta*, *pradhāna*, *prakṛiti* as meaning *Mâyā*. If they belong to a developed system, the Sāṅkhya school has the first claim upon them.

They certainly occur in the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad. But this Upanishad is of a much later date than the original Sāṅkhya school.

### UNION OF BRAHMAN WITH MĀYĀ.

It must be allowed that in this Upanishad allusions to Māyā are contained, and, moreover, that the notion of Māyā occurs frequently with a distinctness that precludes all doubt:

There are two Selves, one is knowing, the other non-knowing, both without birth; one is the ruler, the other is not the ruler. Then there is the one unborn (feminine gender), through whose mediation man enjoys the fruit of his works. And then there is the infinite Self, multi-form but inactive. Where the three are found, that is the Brahman (9). The perishable is the chief (*pradhāna*); the immortal, imperishable is Hara (Śiva). The one God rules over the perishable and the Self. From meditating on him, from joining him, from becoming one with him, there is further cessation of all illusion in the end. *Śvetāśv. Up. I, 9, 10*,

Here the "perishable", the "chief" probably is a cosmic principle like Māyā. This is distinctly stated in verse 10 in the compound "illusion-cessation". This probably means the cessation of the cosmic illusion (*māyā*). In verse 9 "she, the unborn one" probably is also Māyā. The following verses mention her quite distinctly. The first is one of the principal passages for Māyāvāda and is often quoted by Vedāntists:

She, the unborn, the red-white-black one, she who creates many beings like herself; he, the unborn one, loves her and lies with her; when she is used, that other one deserts her (5). The hymns, sacrifices, works, laws, what was, what will be, what the Vedas say, all this the sorcerer created out of "that". Hemmed in by sorcery the other one remains in it (9). Observe, Prakṛiti is Māyā, the Universal Lord is the sorcerer: this shifting universe is pervaded by what members are found on him (10).—*Śvetāśv. Up. IV, 5, 9, 10*.

In spite of the confidence with which the Vedāntists claim v. 5 for themselves, they are not in uncontested possession. The Sāṅkhya school also lays claim to "the unborn one", which they take to be Prakṛiti. V. 10 shows that both the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta school are right. In v. 5 Māyā is called the red-white-black one, which is either an allusion to the constituents (*guṇa*) of Prakṛiti, viz., *rajas* = red, *sattva* = white, *tamas*

=black, or to the three elements, *tejas*=fire, *āpas*=water, and *anna*=earth, which are contained in *Māyā*, and, according to Chhāndogya Up. vi, 4, 1, represent those three colours. With her "he, the unborn one", which probably means the highest Brahman, unites, and from this union "another one" is born, viz., *Īśvara*, who is afterwards named *Māyin*, which may mean descendant of *Māyā*, or sorcerer, or illusionist. If it is said in v. 5 that she, the unborn one, creates many beings like herself, that is, such beings that have only an illusory existence, we must understand this to mean that she does so in and through *Īśvara*, her offspring. It is not said here, whence *Māyā* comes, whether she is born in the Brahman itself, or whether she comes from without into, or rather to, Brahman. According to a passage of the same work *Māyā* or her cause, *Avidyā*, seems to be inherent in the Brahman itself:

In the imperishable, infinite, highest Brahman, in which both knowledge and ignorance are hidden, the one, ignorance, perishes, the other, knowledge, is immortal. *Śvetāśv. Up. V, 1.*

If *Avidyā* here really means *Māyā*, we must ask, how the Brahman, the absolutely real and true, could have contained in itself, or produced out of itself, a thing so unreal and untrue as the cosmic illusion? This is an absolute self-contradiction, which must prove fatal to the whole theory.

#### RESULTS OF THE UNION OF BRAHMAN WITH MĀYĀ.

We may now pursue the results of the union of the Brahman with *Māyā* from *Īśvara* down to *Vaiśvānara* and *Jīva*, as presented by the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*. We read the statements concerning this subject in the fifth chapter of the work, the beginning of which (v. 1) we have just now quoted. It is said there that knowledge is the immortal, and ignorance the perishable: "but he who dispenses both, knowledge and ignorance, is other than they." These words, perhaps, already announce the ruler *Īśvara* in contradistinction to the Brahman in its pure existence. Śāṅkara refers these words to

the pure, impersonal Brahman, and explains them thus: "He is different from them (from knowledge and ignorance)"—*i. e.*, he is only their witness and spectator. Then it goes on in the second verse:

He is the One who rules over all kinds of beings, over all forms of existence, over all origins. He who in the beginning (like a mother) bore the sage (rishim) as a fire-coloured son in his thoughts, whom he then, when he is born, wishes to behold (like a father).

We might also translate: "He who in the beginning bore the sage Kapila as son in his thoughts." Then these words would contain an apotheosis of Kapila, the founder of the Sāṅkhya school,—not a strange thing at the time when this Upanishad was written. But then Kapila would probably be identified with Hiranyagarbha. The "golden germ" and the fire-coloured or "gold-coloured" son in the womb are indeed two ideas closely akin to each other.<sup>1</sup> In the following verses Īśvara, the first personification of the pure Brahman, by its union with Māyā, presents himself:

The god who in many ways spreads out net after net in this field, also draws them in again. The ruler (Īśvara) having created rulers (personal beings), he, the great spirit, rules over them all. As the chariot (of the sun) illumines all the regions of heaven above, below and across, so the blissful adorable deity alone rules over everything that has the nature of an origin. *Śvetāśv. Up. V, 3. 4.*

The deity who here spreads, and draws in again, the nets of creatures, of successive worlds, is Īśvara, the creator, ruler and dissolver of the world. The field where he spreads and draws in his nets is, according to the commentators, Mūla-prakṛiti, primordial nature or primordial matter, which is here identified with Māyā. The author, however, probably means the Ākāśa, universal space permeated by ether, which may also be identified with Māyā. The illumination of the world by Īśvara is probably also meant to show him as its ruler and sustainer. We now descend a step lower and come to the next personification of the Brahman, *viz.*, Hiranyagarbha:

<sup>1</sup> Compare M. Müller, *The Upanishads*, vol. I, p. xxxviii and xxxix.

Brahma knows that which is hidden in the Vedas and in the secret Upanishads as the womb of the Brahman. The former gods and the sages who knew that, became partakers of his being and immortal. *Śvetāśv. Up. V, 6.*

According to the commentators the personal God Brahmā is here identical with Hiranyagarbha-Sūtrātman. He knows the substance of Vedic lore as Brahmayoni, which means either the womb, the source of all things, which is the absolute Brahman, or else the womb from which Brahmā-Hiranyagarbha was born, *i.e.*, the absolute Brahman. Compare further *Śvetāśv. Up. III, 4* and *IV, 12*:

He who is the birth and origin of the gods, the all-ruler, he, the great and wise Rudra, he has formerly engendered Hiranyagarbha: may he endow us with clear understanding.

Rudra is here Īśvara, to whom the gods as well as the rest of the world owe their existence. Hiranyagarbha is, as it were, their representative, the personified embodiment of all heavenly beings. Below him follows, as a further stage of development, Vaiśvānara-Jivātman:

Also the lower one, only as big as a thumb, but in his appearance like the sun, who is endowed with will and self-consciousness, with the attribute of reason and the attribute of the Self, is seen as small as the point of an awl. — The individual Self is to be known as the hundredth part of the end of a hair, split yet a hundred times, and destined for infinity. It is not man, it is not woman, it is not of the neuter sex; it is preserved with the body, which it assumes. *Śvetāśv. Up. V, 8—10.*

The "lower" means here, in contradistinction to the highest absolute Brahman, the lowest degree of its personal emanations, the individual Self. This is as small as a thumb, for it is enclosed in the narrow space of the heart. But in reality the category of extension cannot be applied to this spiritual being, which fact is suggested by the awl-point, and the hundredth part of a hair-point, split a hundred times. But this infinitely small being is destined for infinity, that is, for union with the infinite Brahman. Nevertheless it remains in the body, in which it is born over and over again, till its measure of the fruit of works is consumed.

Here then we have the views of this Upanishad concerning the origin and nature of the human soul. It is a result of the union between the Brahman and Avidyā or Māyā, of the same nature with the former and the latter. But the human soul has that in common not only with the rest of the world and its different parts, but also with the heavenly gods, who constitute only a higher degree of emanation from the Brahman. But it may here once more be doubted whether all this must already be understood as Māyāvāda in the sense of the later Vedānta, so that the world and man and all individual beings would be only so many products of ignorance. It all reads as if only Parīṇāmavāda were meant, in which case the development is indeed caused by Māyā, but without leading to a mere illusory existence. It is very unlikely that this theory, which even Śāṅkara with all his ingenuity could not maintain consistently in its full subtilty, can be ascribed to the authors of even the later Upanishads.

The author of the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad does not refrain from identifying the individual soul, which originated in the way stated above, with the absolute spirit:

The only God is hidden in all living things, all-pervading, the Self in all beings, the superintendent of the works, who makes habitation in all creatures, the witness, the spectator (chettar), who alone exists, who is free from the components. He is the one who has in his power the many who do not work, who fully develops the one seed. The wise who behold him in their own spirit will obtain everlasting bliss, but none besides. *Śvetāśv. Up. VI, 11. 12.*

The different attributes make it evident that the author here speaks of the absolute Self, and yet this is also the Self within all creatures. For the individual Self is identical with the absolute Self. The wise behold it within themselves.

## PRESERVATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD

### BY BRAHMAN.

We have already met with statements in the Upanishads, which ascribe the government of the world either to the Brahman itself or to its first personification, Īśvara. Thus in the

passage just quoted, Śvetāśv. Up. vi, 11. 12, it is said of the Brahman that it is the superintendent of works, who therefore applies and supervises the law of recompense, and also the witness and spectator of human actions. Apart from this he is also called "the one who has in his power the many who do not work". Śankara interprets this as follows: "The many, that is, men and the absolute Self dwelling in them, seem to work, but in truth it is not they who work, but their hands and the rest of their members." It is, however, questionable whether this forced interpretation is what the author intended. He is not likely to have distinguished man and his members in such a hair-splitting way. Nor did the sages of the Upanishads in their time feel the aversion of the Vedānta school to ascribing work to the Supreme Being. The natural, obvious meaning seems to be, that the different individual beings seem to work and believe they do so, but that really the Brahman is the sole working principle of life in them, and thereby holds the many in its power; for immediately afterwards a kind of work is ascribed to the Brahman, *i. e.*, that it develops the one seed into multifarious individual beings (*karoti*). It is therefore both the creator and the ruler of all things. Possibly the idea may be that the Brahman is this through the instrumentality of Īśvara.

He is often described as the inner guide, who therefore moves and directs the whole world of individual creatures. Thus we read in Bṛihadāraṇyaka Up. III, 7, 1—3, that the wife of Kāpya Patañchala was possessed by an evil spirit, who addressed Kāpya and other students of Brahma knowledge with this question: "Do you know, Kāpya, the inner guide (*antaryāmin*), who guides this world and that world and all the creatures?" The disciples put the question before the wise Yājñavalkya, whose answer is as follows:

He who is in the earth, different from the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, who guides the earth within, he is the Self, the inner guide, the immortal one.

The same thing that is said of the earth is then said, in exactly the same words, of water, fire, the sky, the moon and

stars, of ether, darkness, and light, which are all designated as divine beings (*adhidaivatā*); whereupon all the earthly creatures, all beings, the vital airs, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the mind, the skin, knowledge, etc., follow in turn. Bṛihad. Up. III, 7, 16—23.

Scholars do not agree as to who is meant by Antaryāmin, the inner guide. Deussen, following Śankara, takes him to be the absolute Self. Gough calls him "Demiurgus", *i.e.*, Īśvara. This assumption is supported by the fact that, in the introductory story, the question concerning the Antaryāmin is preceded by another question, *viz.*, that concerning the thread (*sūtra*), which holds together this world and yonder, and all beings. Yājñavalkya answers: "Vāyu (the god together with the phenomenon of wind) is the thread (*sūtra*)." This seems to be an allusion to Sūtrātman-Hiraṇyagarbha, who is one of the rulers (*īśvara*). Śankara's interpretation is not altogether excluded by this, the question being only whether the absolute or the individual Self is meant here, Īśvara being frequently identified with the absolute Self. Either directly, or indirectly through Īśvara, the Brahman is here said to be the inner guide, who leads the world by means of a thread, *i.e.*, keeps it in order and governs it according to his will. So much does he support, preserve, lead, and govern everything that he alone is the principle of all the movements of life, of all the functions of the human mind, and also of all phenomena and processes of nature. This universal government is, indeed, absolutely devoid of any ethical character; on the contrary, it has become a kind of purely physical process. Nor can anything more than this be expected of an impersonal being like the Brahman.

#### DISSOLUTION OF THE WORLD IN THE BRAHMAN.

As the Brahman produces the world out of itself, or makes it issue out of itself through its union with Avidyā or Māyā, as the Brahman pervades, sustains, leads, and governs the world, so it is also the goal of the world, the place into which



it must return. In so far we may say that according to the Upanishads the Brahman is also the world-destroyer. We have seen above how Īśvara, as the architect through whom the Brahman works, not only spreads, but also draws in again the nets of the world (Śvet. Up. v, 3). It may remain an open question whether at that early time this was intended to be understood according to the later theory of the world-dissolution (*pralaya*) at the close of a world-period (*kalpāntara*). The Bhagavadgītā contains this theory fully developed. The idea frequently occurs in other passages concerning the Brahman: "It is dissolved into it." Deussen quotes the following verses with reference to this subject:

He who has not given up his evil-doing, who is not quiet, collected in himself, who has no rest in his mind, cannot obtain the Self by means of knowledge. He to whom both the Brāhmaṇa and the Kshatriya-caste serve as food, and to whom death is the sauce of that food, who knows where that Self is to be found? *Kaṭh. Up. II, 24. 25.*

According to Deussen, Śāṅkara here shows in detail that this Self can only be the absolute Brahman. The caste of the Brahmins and the rulers (*kshatram*) serve it as food, that is, according to Śāṅkara, the individual souls as well as all individual creatures, as represented by those two castes, are finally dissolved again into the Brahman. Death serves as sauce, which makes swallowing more easy, *i.e.*, death is the means of bringing about dissolution into the Brahman, especially with those who are already liberated in the body. Finally at the end of the world everything returns into the Brahman; it is the destroyer of the world.

With this we have come to the end of what the Upanishads have to say on the origin, the nature, the existence and the destruction of the universe, including man. The world, including the microcosm, was born out of the absolute Brahman. On this point all the Upanishads agree. It cannot be denied that the older Upanishads, especially Bṛihadāranyaka and Chhāndogya, simply consider the Brahman as the material cause of the world, creation as a substantially homogeneous emanation from

the Brahman, and the world as a reality. In the process of creation the process of the birth of the gods is also involved, who thus belong to the sphere of cosmic existence. A fixed, uniform order in the emanation of individual beings cannot be discovered in the Upanishads. Each of the sages gives his own order, differing from that of the others. But they all have in common the idea that the real existence of the world rests in the Brahman, and that the individual Self of man is identical with the absolute Self of the Brahman. The later Upanishads already contain the idea of *Māyā*, by whose instrumentality the birth of the world out of the Brahman was brought about. These are the beginnings both of the dualist doctrine of *Prakṛiti* in the *Sāṅkhya* school, and of the monist doctrine of *Māyā* and *Avidyā* in the *Vedānta* school. It is of little consequence here, if the schools speak of the world as being guided and governed by the Brahman, for these as well as the creation of the world and its dissolution into the Brahman, are more or less physical processes, which proceed in accordance with a mysterious, blindly working law of recompense.

### 3. THE DUALIST AND MONIST CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD IN THE PHILOSOPHIC SCHOOLS.

#### VAIŚEŚHIKA VIEW OF THE WORLD.

Among the philosophic schools the *Sāṅkhya* and the *Vedānta* stand nearest to the Upanishads in their view of the world. But before we examine the conception of the world according to these two schools we may just cast a glance at that of the *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* schools, because these yield very little on this subject. The *Nyāya* school itself does not speculate on the origin of the world. But the *Sūtras* of *Kaṇāda*, which form the basis of the *Vaiśeṣika* system,

contain an atomist theory of the origin of things. In book ix of these Sūtras we find aphorisms on non-existence, which precedes existence and development. What these aphorisms contain is, however, so self-evident that we may as well omit them. But what do these Sūtras say about the creation and existence of the universe? "The common property of substance and quality is that they originate things of the same class." Vaiś. Sūtra II, I, 9. On this the commentator observes: "Terrene atoms originate terrene aggregates of two atoms; blue colour and the like in an atom produce blue colour and the like in an aggregate of two atoms." More simply expressed this means, the qualities of the atoms are also the qualities of their products, as a cause can only produce an effect equal to it. Further: "The eternal is existent and uncaused. The effect thereof is the mark of its existence." Book IV, Lesson I, 1. 2. These are incontestible truths, if we understand the first as meaning that the eternal can have its cause only in itself. But now the author goes on: "The supposition that atoms are non-eternal is nescience." Sūtra IV, I, 5.

It may be remarked regarding this, that the boldness of an assertion does not prove its truth. Who can prove that there is such a thing as atoms in the sense of Kaṇāda? And who can prove that they are eternal and have their cause in themselves? The qualities are treated of in the following sentences: "The qualities have been stated. Also the colour, taste, smell, the touch of the earth, etc., inasmuch as substances are non-eternal. By this is declared their eternity in things eternal." Book VII, I, 1—3. "In the non-eternal (extension) is not eternal, in the eternal it is eternal. Atomic extension is eternal." Book VII, I, 18—20.<sup>1</sup>

The last sentence might be granted, if the eternity of atoms had been proved. But Kaṇāda has not even proved their existence, but simply taken it for granted.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 233.

Of course, we do not dispute that science has good reasons for its theory of atoms. And if Kaṇāda would content himself with stating a hypothesis which might help to interpret nature as it is, there would be no objection to his statements. But he wants to explain the origin of the world and therefore makes the atoms eternal, creative potencies, which have the cause of their existence in themselves. In Kaṇāda's system these atoms stand in the place of the Brahman, and the Brahman may be called an atom, or a monad. But it is absolute, spiritual, and only one, wherefore its production of a uniform world would be comprehensible. The atoms are innumerable material beings. According to the Vaiśeṣhika system there are four classes of atoms: terrene, aqueous, aerial, and igneous. These are, of course, four of the five elements commonly accepted. Ether is wanting, probably because it was thought incapable of being atomised. The qualities of terrene atoms are colour, taste, smell, palpability; those of aqueous atoms are colour, taste and palpability; those of aerial atoms are taste and palpability; of fire colour is the only quality. We have probably here a fragment of the Sāṅkhya doctrine of the five elements. But the whole theory falls to the ground by the fact that neither earth, nor water, nor air are elements, and fire not even a substance, but only a concomitant phenomenon of a chemical process, and does not consist of atoms at all. But apart from all this, the origin of the world cannot be accounted for by the play of atoms.

According to the theory of the Vaiśeṣhika school the union of the atoms into the multifarious things of the visible world is not brought about by the almighty power of a Creator, nor by a force inherent in themselves, but by an influence from without.

"It is to be inferred that destiny is the cause of the motion of pieces of grass attracted by amber, of the upward flaming of fire, of the horizontal motion of wind, and of the action of primordial atoms"—such is the remark of a commentator on one of the Sūtras. But what is destiny? The answer is sur-

prising: "Fate is the accumulated fruit of former births." Moved by this power, equal atoms attract each other and thus the world is produced. Here appears the practical motive and the practical determination of all Indian philosophy. According to its views the world is chiefly metempsychosis, and the fruit of works is the cause of its origin. But we must not ask how the first world of all, the theatre and the subjects of the first works of all, came into existence. For to this the Vaiśeshika, and the Indian philosopher in general, has no answer to give.

Through destiny the material world stands also in relation with the Self. "The universal pervasion of the soul is proved, inasmuch as conjunction with soul influenced by destiny is the cause of the action in the atoms at the time of creation"—observes a commentator. This action of the atoms is without beginning and without end. Nor do we get an answer to the question concerning the object of this action of the atoms. We can only suppose that the object is the liberation of the soul. This doctrine needs no refutation. To the Indian mind it would be sufficient for its refutation to point out that it places the three principles — atoms, destiny, soul — in juxtaposition, and therefore is opposed to the monism of the Upanishads. The great monist Śāṅkara therefore combats the theory with unsparing, severe criticism. Young India, however, is more or less unconscious of that bitter antagonism.

#### THE SĀṆKHYA VIEW OF THE WORLD.

The doctrine of the Sāṅkhya school concerning the world and its origin<sup>1</sup> has the general idea of emanation and the theory of the reality of phenomena in common with the doctrine of the Upanishads. According to the Sāṅkhya school reality is to be ascribed to everything that may be perceived by the senses. Whereas the later Sāṅkhya texts try to refute in detail

---

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, p. 201 ff.

the theory of the Vedānta school that the world is a mere illusion (*māyāvāda*), a similar doctrine taught by a Buddhist sect, *viz.*, that apart from thinking everything else is illusion, and finally the nihilism of another Buddhist sect, *viz.*, that non-existence is the only reality; the idea of the reality of the world was — according to Garbe<sup>1</sup> — at the time of the origin of the Sāṅkhya school a matter of course, so that nobody felt called upon to contest those theories or to prove the truth of this idea. But how then did this real world come into existence? The Sāṅkhya school unanimously answers: Through the instrumentality of Prakṛiti. Dahlmann,<sup>2</sup> as Weber before him, thinks it possible to trace the origin of this theory back to the “undistinguishable water-flood” of Nāsadiya Sūkta (see above p. 184). With this notion he combines that of non-existence, and thinks that out of these notions that of Prakṛiti has grown with ever increasing definiteness. It is indisputable that the notion of Prakṛiti has certain points of contact with that of non-existence, in so far as this means the undeveloped state of the visible universe. And here may be found the roots of this conception. But as regards the “surging waters” in Nāsadiya Sūkta, Garbe<sup>3</sup> rightly observes: “The primordial matter of the Sāṅkhyas has no relation to water, for water comes quite indirectly out of Prakṛiti, together with the subtile elements and only after a series of intermediate products. It, therefore, cannot be identical with Prakṛiti.”

If we ask the Sāṅkhya philosophers themselves, they tell us that they arrive at the notion of Prakṛiti by the observation that the world is subject to constant change, to continual evolution and dissolution. To the Sāṅkhya philosopher Prakṛiti is the fixed point in the constant change of visible things, the point from which everything issues and to which everything returns.

From the finiteness of individual beings, from the homogeneousness (of species and classes), from the difference between cause and effect, from the undivided unity of the whole universe (it follows) that there is a first cause, *i. e.*, the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> *Nirvāṇa*, p. 175 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, p. 12.

undeveloped, which works out itself in the three components by mixing and changing. *Sāṅkhya Kūr.* 15. 16.

The finiteness of individual beings demands an infinite entity from which they issue; the homogeneousness of the different classes of creatures at different times demands a principle, according to which this phenomenon is regulated; the different effects which appear in the created world demand a final cause, a creative principle; the unity of the universe demands a principle which accounts for it. The Sāṅkhya philosopher finds all this in Prakṛiti, which is here called "the undeveloped" (*avyakta*), because the world is evolved out of it.

The word Prakṛiti was formerly rendered as "nature", as for instance in the St. Petersburg Dictionary, and more recently by Dahlmann, who, however, renders it also frequently by "primordial matter". If we understand by nature not the *natura naturata*, but the *natura naturans* of Spinoza, this opinion has a grain of truth in it. The word, in the first place, means "primordial form" in contradistinction to *vikṛiti* = change, re-formation; and in the Sāṅkhya texts the word *pradhāna* = the precedent, the chief, the pre-eminent, is used as a synonym for Prakṛiti. But the Sāṅkhya philosophers find in *prakṛiti* the active meaning of "producer", because, according to their doctrine, it is one of the most important characteristics of Prakṛiti, by which she is distinguished from *Puruṣa* = spirit, that she evolves the material world out of herself. Garbe denies the propriety of translating Prakṛiti by "nature", "because this means simply the totality of visible things in their present condition, the developed world, which cannot be said of Prakṛiti. She is, on the contrary, the material, creative principle, to which all the individual creatures in the world really owe their existence." If we keep this in mind, we may with Garbe translate "primordial matter".

If we ask what is the real nature of Prakṛiti, we get the following answer: "*Sattvarajastamasām sāmāyāvasthā prakṛitih* = Prakṛiti is the equilibrium of the component substances *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*." Sāṅkhya Sūtra I, 61.

We have here the three *guṇas* of Prakṛiti. The word *guṇa* cannot be rendered by "quality"; for the commentator observes with regard to this passage: "*Sattva* and the (two) other (*guṇas*) are substances (*dravyāni*), not qualities in the sense of the Vaiśeṣikas." The reason for this is given in Sāṅkhya Sūtra VI, 39: "*Sattva*, etc., are not qualities (or attributes) [of primordial matter], because they make it up."<sup>1</sup> Besides, qualities are ascribed to the *guṇas*, and mere qualities cannot themselves have qualities. We therefore follow Professor Garbe and render *guṇa* by primordial substance or component substances (of Prakṛiti). The *guṇas* are the components of primordial matter.

That which is developed has the three components. It is non-spiritual, objective, general, without reason, and producing. Such also is the pre-eminent (*pradhāna*, *i. e.*, Prakṛiti). *Sāṅkhya Kār. 11.*

Prakṛiti, therefore, has the three components in common with that which is developed, *i. e.*, the world as evolved out of her. These components are *sattva* = light, joy, goodness; *rajas* = gloom, passion, pain; and *tamas* = darkness, insensibility, badness. Both the developed and the undeveloped, *i. e.*, the world and primordial matter, have in common not only the rather general qualities of non-spirituality, objectivity (*i. e.*, being the object of knowledge), and absence of reason, but also the feature that they are both "producing". For primordial matter produces the world, and in the developed world it goes on producing ever fresh individual beings. But primordial matter is eternal, without beginning and without end:

Since the root has no root, the root (of the universe) is rootless. Even if a series of causes were to be assumed, there must come a stop at a certain point. Therefore it is only a name, if we speak of the root of things, calling it "Prakṛiti". Both with regard to Prakṛiti as with regard to the two (Purusha and Prakṛiti) uncreated (*i. e.*, beginningless) being is thereby proved. *Sāṅkhya Sūtra I, 67—69.*

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *ibid.* p. 210.



The root of the universe, out of which it has grown, is Prakṛiti, also called Mūlaprakṛiti, *i. e.*, root-matter, or primordial matter. As such, however, it has not itself a cause, and is therefore called *amūlamūla*, *i. e.*, rootless root.

Concerning the process of the evolution of the world we read in Sāṅkhya Sūtra 1, 159:

Though she is without reason, Prakṛiti does work, as is the case with milk.

As by fermentation milk is changed into cream, curds, and whey, thus Prakṛiti develops into the multifarious universe. The three components of which primordial matter is composed lose their equilibrium, and in this way the evolution of the world proceeds, each of the components struggling with the others for predominance. The process is conceived purely in the sense of emanation.

If we ask for the reason or cause of this phenomenon, the Sāṅkhya philosopher answers, that the impulse issues from Puruṣa, that is from the individual souls, Prakṛiti being as eternal as they, and connected with them from all eternity. Their mutual relation is one of inter-dependence, but not so that primordial matter would owe its existence to Puruṣa. Matter only bears the unconscious impulse in itself to act in favour of Puruṣa. This impulse is stimulated into activity by an influence of the Spirit, which is also unconscious, somewhat like the attraction of iron by a magnet. But even with this the last cause of universal evolution is not yet mentioned. The last cause is the law of recompense (*karma*). This law gives to primordial matter the impulse of evolution. During the time of dissolution everything is withdrawn into primordial matter, whose components rest in equilibrium, and also merit and demerit are dormant. But all the reward of merit not enjoyed, all the demerit not atoned for, in the foregoing æon awakes at the beginning of a new æon; and, both according to Vaiśeṣhika and Sāṅkhya views, this remainder of works (*adriṣṭa*) sets primordial matter in motion, or, which is the same thing, disturbs the equilibrium of the component sub-

stances. As the beginning of this movement depends on the beginning of a new æon, and therefore on time, besides the law of recompense time also is considered as the cause of the evolution of the world.<sup>1</sup> Thus the poet says in the *Mahābhārata* about the evolution of the world:

From the components issue components, and into them they return again; in the same way the components issue from primordial matter, and into it they return again. *XII, 305, 23.*

From the components of Prakṛiti, sattva, rajas, tamas, issues everything that in this world has the nature of good, of joy, of light, or of passion, of pain, of gloom, or finally the nature of insensibility, of idleness, of darkness; and all this is dissolved again into those original components of primordial matter. The latter itself develops into these component substances, which at the close of an æon it withdraws again into itself. That this evolution takes place solely in favour of Puruṣa is proved by a passage of the *Bhagavadgīta*, which doubtless give expression to genuine Sāṅkhya views:

The components which come from primordial matter are called joy, pain, and insensibility: it is they, O king, which fetter the imperishable individual soul in the body. *XIV, 5.*

Nature by means of its three components holds the individual soul fettered in the body, either for the enjoyment of the remainder of works, or for the attainment of liberating knowledge. Or, as it is said in another passage—*Mahābhārata XII, 245, 1:*

What are called the modifications of primordial matter, by them the embodied Spirit is determined; they cannot know him, but he can discern them.

The individuality of the embodied soul (*jīvātman*, here called *kshetrajña* = he who knows the field of the material) depends on the components of primordial matter. If Sattva predominates, the individual soul is distinguished by "virtue, self-control, equanimity, benevolence, kindness, purity, happiness, serenity, contentment, activity of the sense-organs and the mind, and obtainment of supernatural powers". This

---

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *ibid.* p. 220 ff.

component predominates in the world of the gods. If *Rajas* prevails, this makes itself known in the individual soul by "every kind of pain, by grief, care, anxiety, anger, discontent, dependence, by jealousy, envy, restlessness, excitement, passion, lust, love, and hatred; by malice, contentiousness, censoriousness, impetuosity, wildness, unfriendliness; by ambition, aspiration and activity". The world of men is ruled by this component. Finally, if *Tamas* predominates, this shows itself in the individual soul by "depression, fear, fright, despair, apathy, irresolution, delusion, dullness, ignorance, intoxication, madness, loathing, carelessness, senselessness, sleep, impotency, by hard-heartedness, shamelessness, licentiousness, impurity, general badness, and nihilism (unbelief)". The animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms are governed by this component<sup>1</sup>. We see that from primordial matter and its components good and evil in every sense indiscriminately issue, and also that which lies between both. These are the fetters by which the individual Spirit is bound to matter and transmigration. But he can do one thing, which primordial matter and its components cannot do: by means of distinguishing knowledge he may gain liberation, and this is what this philosophic cosmogony has for its object. From the order of the products issuing from primordial matter we can distinctly see that this cosmogony aims at interpreting man. According to it the world consists of twenty-three principles (*tattva*), above which stand *Prakṛiti* and *Puruṣa* as the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth:

The great being, the undeveloped, the principle, which produces the ego, the ten organs (of perception and action) with the one (inner sense), the five great elements, the (five) subtile elements,—this is the continual creation. The number of principles is stated to be twenty-four and one. *Mahābhār. XIV, 35. 47. 48.*<sup>2</sup>

The order of production is not strictly adhered to in this list of principles. The "undeveloped", which appears as the second, is *Prakṛiti*, which, as unproduced producer, ought to

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *ibid* p. 214 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Dahlmann, *Nirvāṇa*, p. 80 ff.

stand first. Likewise, the five subtile elements are connected with the ten sense-organs, and therefore ought to come before the five great gross elements. The first named "great being (*mahat*)" is *buddhi*, i. e., reason, the organ of decision, judgement, resolution. From it issues *ahankāra*, the producer of the ego or of self-consciousness, the principle "through which we think ourselves acting, suffering, etc., whereas we ourselves, that is, our souls, are for ever free from it."<sup>1</sup> From *Ahankāra* issues the inner sense (*manas*) with the outward senses (*bāhyendriya*). The inner sense is the central organ, in which the activities of the outward senses meet and from which they issue; it is also the seat of desire, doubt, and reflection. The outward senses are divided into the five senses of perception (*buddhīndriya*, *jñānendriya*), and the five organs of action (*karmendriya*). In contradistinction to these ten outward organs, *Buddhi*, *Ahankāra* and *Manas* together are called the inner organ (*antahkaraṇa*). The organs of perception are *śrotra* = hearing, *tvak* (*sparsa*) = touch, *chakshus* = sight, *jihvā* (*rasa*) = taste, *ghrāṇa* = smelling; the organs of action are *vāch* = speaking, *pāṇi* = handling, *pāda* = walking, *pāyu* = excreting, *upastha* = generating. As these faculties are designated as transcendental (*atīndriya*) having only their seat in the visible organs, Garbe is right in emphasising that the above names do not mean the visible organs, although otherwise *śrotra*, for instance, means ear, *tvak* skin, *pāṇi* hand, *pāda* foot, etc.

From the cosmic *Ahankāra*, together with the sense-organs, issue the subtile elements (*sūkshmaabhūta*), also called *tan-mātra* = this only, because each of these subtile elements has only its own characteristic, unlike the gross elements, of which always the succeeding one possesses all the qualities of all the preceding ones. The subtile elements are *śabda* = sound, *sparsa* = palpability, *rūpa* = form and colour, *rasa* = taste, *gandha* = smell. They constitute only the component substances of these qualities in general, and do not yet exhibit all the

---

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *ibid.* p. 248.

different kinds of sound, colour, taste, etc. They are therefore called *aviśeṣha* = having no differences, whereas the gross elements are called *viśeṣha* = having differences. The gross elements (*sthūlabhūta*, *mahābhūta*) are produced from the subtile ones. The element of sound becomes ether (*ākāśa*), that of palpability air (*vāyu*), that of colour fire (*tejas*), that of taste water (*ap*), that of smell earth (*prithivī*). Every succeeding element possesses the qualities of all the foregoing, so that ether can only be heard, but earth can be heard, touched, seen, tasted, and smelled. The construction of the whole material world is brought about by the mixing of the gross elements. Primordial matter participates in the evolution of these products in so far as it gives the necessary power to those which themselves produce others. The products and primordial matter together are called the producers (*prakṛitayaḥ*). As regards the relations between the three components of Prakṛiti and the products, Rajas is ever present in Buddhi, but Sattva as well as Tamas may predominate, which then determines the character of the individual soul. In the production of Manas from Ahankāra the latter is influenced by Sattva, in the production of the subtile elements by Tamas.

The three inner organs, together with the ten outward senses and the five subtile elements, form the inner, invisible body. As the principle of personality in the present life and as the principle of continuation and identity during the innumerable births of transmigration this body is called *linga* = the essential characteristic. As the *lingadeha* (*-śarīra*) is composed of the subtile elements and the organs homogeneous to them, it is also called *sūkshmadeha* (*-śarīra*) = subtile body. In contradistinction to this, the outward, visible body is called *sthūladeha* (*-śarīra*) = the gross body. It is built up of the gross element of earth, whereas the other four elements contribute to preserve it, water effecting the preservation of the blood, fire that of the warmth of the body, air that of breath, and ether that of the windpipe. The principle of this gross body is the soul combined with breath (*prāṇa*). Through the connection of the

eternal and absolute soul (*kevala*) with the two bodies it becomes the individual soul (*jīva*). The gross, material body of men and beasts is generated by their parents. The sphere of individual souls includes the gods, men, beasts, and plants, in fact, all organic life, which by the indwelling of the soul is sharply and rigorously separated from what is inorganic.

We may now try to draw a picture comprising the whole world of the Sāṅkhya school:

1. *Purusha*, the soul.
2. *Prakṛiti*, primordial matter.

First group of products: the inner organs (*antahkaraṇa*).

3. *Buddhi*, reason, organ of decision.
4. *Ahankāra*, self-consciousness.
5. *Manas*, the inner sense, organ of reflection.

Second group of products: organs of perception (*buddhēndriya*, *jñānēndriya*).

6. *Śrotra*, sense of hearing.
7. *Tvak* (*sparsa*), sense of touch.
8. *Chakshus*, sense of sight.
9. *Jihvā* (*rasa*), sense of taste.
10. *Ghrāṇa*, sense of smell.

Third group of products: organs of work (*karmēndriya*).

11. *Vāch*, speaking.
12. *Pāṇi*, grasping.
13. *Pāda*, walking.
14. *Pāyu*, excretion.
15. *Upastha*, generating.

Fourth group of products: the subtile elements (*sūkshma bhūta*, *tanmātra*, *aviśeṣa*).

16. *Śabda*, sound.
17. *Sparsa*, palpability.
18. *Rūpa*, form or colour.
19. *Rasa*, taste.
20. *Gandha*, smell.

Fifth group of products: the gross elements (*sthūlabhūta*, *mahābhūta*, *viśeṣa*).

21. *Ākāśa*, ether.
22. *Vāyu*, air.
23. *Tejas*, fire.
24. *Ap*, water.
25. *Prithivī*, earth.

We shall conclude with a passage from the great epic poem which depicts the individual Self in its relations to the absolute Self, which is the ultimate object of the whole Sāṅkhya doctrine:

The inner sense from itself produces desire, and reason is the mother of resolutions; the heart knows what is dear and what is not dear, and the thrice different impulses of action. Beyond the senses are their objects, beyond the objects is the inner sense, and beyond the inner sense is reason; the spirit is to be thought beyond reason. Yea, reason is the Spirit of man, and reason through the Spirit is in the Spirit. When it produces desires from itself, then reason becomes the inner sense. Corresponding to the difference of the senses reason accomplishes its own modification. Hearing, it becomes the sense of hearing; feeling, it is called the sense of touch; seeing, it becomes the sense of sight; tasting, it becomes the sense of taste; smelling, it becomes the sense of smell. Thus reason modifies itself into the senses. Of these sense organs it is said that the invisible Spirit inhabits them. As reason has its existence in the Spirit it continually moves in three forms of existence. *Mahābhār. XII, 247, 1—6.*

The Ahankāra of the Sāṅkhya doctrine, the organ of self-consciousness, which has its place between Buddhi = reason, and Manas = the inner sense, is missing in this picture of the individual soul. Buddhi and Manas are, in the sense of the Sāṅkhya, designated as the organ of resolution and the organ of desire respectively. The heart is probably to be understood as the organ of desire, and then it stands for Manas. The enumeration then proceeds from the outside towards the inside, and there first the outward sense organs are found, and behind these the objects, *i. e.*, the subtile, invisible elements, which are not themselves perceived by the outward senses, but only in their effects and thus conveyed to the inner sense. Then follows the inner sense, and behind it reason, which is nearest to the absolute Self, the Spirit, an intellectual ray of light falling

from the Spirit into reason. It is on account of this fact that reason may be called "the Spirit in man"; it may also be said that through this reflection of light from the Spirit reason is in the Spirit. Pervaded by the light of the Spirit, reason is really the principle of perception in the sense organs, and that to such a degree that it may be said to modify itself into the organs of perception. Thus reason has, as it were, three forms of existence: one turned towards the Spirit embodied in the organism, one turned to its own interior, and one active in the outward organs of perception. It is here evidently taken together with Ahankāra, the organ of self-consciousness. The inner organs together with the outward senses and the body are in the Sāṅkhya doctrine called the Upādhis. This term, which, according to Garbe<sup>1</sup>, is perhaps borrowed from the Nyāya system, means wrapping, because the Spirit is wrapped in these organs. By its connection with these Upādhis and with breath (*prāṇa*) the absolute Soul becomes an empiric soul. "This connection of each soul with its Upādhis consists in the form of continuity without beginning, which is only interrupted by the periods of world-dissolution, and lasts till the distinguishing knowledge is obtained. In virtue of this connection the Soul is Lord (*svāmin*) and Guide (*adhiṣṭhātar*) of its Upādhis. But it exercises no active influence on the organs... For it is without will...and in its nature for ever unchangeable".<sup>2</sup>

According to the Sāṅkhya philosophy, "what has issued from Prakṛiti must return again into it. This takes place at the time of universal dissolution (*laya*, *pralaya*). The products of Prakṛiti go back again in the reversed order of their evolution, each returning into the preceding one, and finally into primordial matter, so that the equilibrium of its three components is restored. But as the components must continually change and move, also [when the world is] in the state of dissolution, Sattva only develops in the form of Sattva, Rajas only in the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 305.



form of Rajas, Tamas only in the form of Tamas".<sup>1</sup> Thus no disturbance of the equilibrium of the components takes place, for with this the new development of the world would begin again and the state of dissolution would cease. According to Garbe the Sāṅkhya documents do not furnish a satisfactory answer concerning the cause of the world-dissolution. Garbe, therefore, supposes that according to Sāṅkhya views, as in Buddhism, a purely moral cause, *viz.*, sin and the merit of living beings, brings about the disintegration and reintegration of the universe, sin being the disintegrating and virtue the reintegrating force.<sup>2</sup> In the Bhagavadgītā, Kṛishṇa, the manifestation of the Supreme Being, describes the process of universal dissolution quite in the language of the Sāṅkhya school, but with a slight theistic modification, in the following way:

At the end of every æon, O son of Kuntī, all living creatures return into my nature: and when a new æon begins, I let them stream forth again. Taking hold of my own nature I let again and again stream forth the whole mass of created beings who, without a will of their own, only obey the power of nature. IX, 7. 8.

"My own nature", or simply "nature", is here Prakṛiti, which is appropriated by Kṛishṇa, the Supreme Being, and thus loses her dualistic independence. The duration of these æons recurring without a beginning and without an end may be inferred from Bhagavadgītā VIII, 17—19:

They who know one day of Brahmā, which lasts a thousand ages, and the night that ends after a thousand ages, they only know the meaning of day and night. From the unperceived all things issue at daybreak: at the approach of night they dissolve again in that which is called the unperceived. This mass of created beings arise again and again, and dissolve again, O son of Prithā, at the approach of night, to arise again at dawn of day without their own will.

What we called an æon above is here called a day of Brahmā, the creator, who is identical with Īśvara. Such a day includes a thousand ages (*yuga*). There are four ages: 1, Kṛitayuga = 4800 years of the gods; 2, Tretāyuga = 3600 years of the gods; 3, Dvāparayuga = 2400 years of the gods; 4, the

<sup>1</sup> Commentary to Kārikā, 16. See Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Garbe, *ibid.* p. 227.

Kaliyuga = 1200 years of the gods; all the four together = 12,000 years of the gods. A day of the gods is a human year; a year of the gods 360 human years. The four ages together therefore make up 4,320,000 human years. A thousand ages are a Brahmā day, which therefore lasts  $\frac{1000}{4} = 250 \times 4,320,000 = 1,080,000,000$  human years. 360 Brahmā days are a Brahmā year, and Brahmā's whole life lasts 100 Brahmā years. The reader may himself calculate the gigantic figure which will be the result. Then Brahmā's rule also will be at an end. His organism enters Prakṛiti and he himself returns from the condition of empiric souls to that of absolute souls. Of course, the genuine Sāṅkhya philosopher does not admit the existence of a creator; wherefore, from his point of view, these calculations are superfluous.

As the conception of God adopted by the Sāṅkhya school must be called atheism, so its conception of the world must be termed dualism. Primordial matter and the spiritual Self stand side by side without anything like mutual dependence; matter is eternal as well as the Self, and everything issues out of matter by a process of self-evolution. Yet this dualist conception of the world and of man rises high above the stupid soulless materialism of our days. In the first place this doctrine finds the cause of the origin of the world, not like western materialism in mere chance, but in the law of recompense, which, although imperfectly conceived and applied, has yet an ethical bearing. The Sāṅkhya school was not so absolutely devoid of all moral sentiment as our modern votaries of force and matter. And further it did not make the stupid attempt to evolve self-conscious Spirit out of dead matter, or to make it a mere function of a material organism. The advocates of this philosophy had a much too vivid impression of the independence and power of the human soul to make such a hopeless mistake. As Christians we cannot but joyfully acknowledge this.

But, of course, that does not make us blind to the fact that the whole cosmic system of the Sāṅkhya school rests on a very fragile foundation. The only thing proved by the

Sāṅkhya school is the necessity of a first cause for the empiric world. That this must be Prakṛiti, primordial matter of their particular description, with its three components, is a dogma which the Sāṅkhya school has not proved, and which cannot be proved. And yet a "rationalistic" philosophy, as the Sāṅkhya claims to be, cannot be excused from furnishing such a proof. Nor can it prove the assumption that the rest of the world must simply issue from primordial matter. Here, too, we meet at every step with mere assertions instead of conclusive proofs. A philosophy which bases everything on rational arguments cannot be allowed to evade the question: what is the origin of primordial matter? To make it an eternal principle which evolves the world out of itself, is to make it a deity, and thus to jump from the sphere of philosophy into that of mythology, where, of course, rational arguments and proofs come to an end. If the Self is absolute, primordial matter cannot also be absolute. To assume two absolute beings is a self-contradiction and therefore not admissible in philosophy.

Finally, the doctrine of the eternal existence of innumerable absolute souls is an unproved, irrational dogma. These Selves cannot be called absolute. For there can be only one absolute, unlimited, independent Being. Each of those Selves is necessarily limited and made finite by the mere existence of other Selves. Such beings have no reasonable claim to absolute existence. It is quite a different thing, if, from moral reasons, we feel ourselves constrained to believe in an Absolute Spirit, or rather in the personal, living God. We have then an absolute, independent, unlimited unity, which is wanting in the Sāṅkhya doctrine. That this God should not have created the world, is also a mere assumption, to which the sophisms of the Sāṅkhya school cannot give the least degree of credibility. Therefore the conception of the world of the Sāṅkhya school is proved to be untenable on critical examination. And with their ideas of the origin of the world, that of the dissolution of the world into primordial matter also falls to the ground, quite apart from the fact that no philosophic proof can

be furnished for it. It is, therefore, not without good reasons that documents that stand in close relation to the Sāṅkhya school, such as the Mahābhārata and Bhagavadgītā, have tried to interpret this dualism into a kind of theistic monism. But the latter carries the dualistic eggshells on its back, in so far as it generally remains a matter of doubt whether its personal gods are not merely individual souls, and then only calculated for the religious worship of common people, while they must disappear before the critical analysis of the philosopher.

### THE VEDĀNTA CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD.

To the strict dualism of the Sāṅkhya school the Vedānta opposes a monism of the same consistency. The Vedānta school considers itself as the only lawful heir of the Upanishads and of the whole Veda. It, therefore, receives all the statements of those documents concerning the origin of the world, and without sifting them critically makes them up into a monistic system. Of course, it remains doubtful with what measure of success. The Vedānta philosophers not only do not steer clear of the dualism of exoteric and esoteric doctrine, but they also get entangled in the dualism of Brahman and Avidyā, which becomes no less fatal to their monism than the dualism of Puruṣa and Prakṛiti of the Sāṅkhya school.

Strictly speaking the Vedānta philosopher should refrain from talking of the creation of the world. From his point of view even an evolution of the world is out of the question. For as a strictly consistent monist he declares all the phenomena of the world to be Māyā, *i.e.*, unreal delusion. The hard reality of cosmic existence would not disturb him in his views, but he finds himself face to face with certain statements of the Veda. Here it is often said that God created the world. Thus Śaṅkara, for instance, in his commentary on the Brahma-Sūtras, finds himself under the necessity of delineating an exoteric picture of the world, exactly as if full reality were to be ascribed to that world.

## THE MOTIVE FOR CREATION.

The first question that engages his attention here has reference to the motive which induced the Supreme Being to create the world. The creator is, of course, the Brahman, although only the lower Brahman in the form of Īśvara. But the Vedāntist cannot ascribe a motive to the Brahman which could have induced it to create the world. No more can he impute to the Brahman that it created the world without thinking and without a cause. Śāṅkara, therefore, has recourse to the following expedient: he says, that "like a prince or a mighty man, who has everything he may desire, proceeds to do a thing for mere pastime, or as inhalation and exhalation takes place of itself without a motive from without, so the Brahman created the world without a motive, merely for the sake of amusement (*līlā*)".<sup>1</sup>

If Śāṅkara here asserts that no other motive is to be found in the scriptures, and that the mere desire to create, as for the sake of amusement, cannot be assumed according to the scriptures, he forgets or suppresses the fact that it is said in Nāsadiya Sūkta, Rīgv. x, 129, 4: "Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit" — "the existent's kinship in the non-existent", and that it is often said in the Upanishads, "In the beginning was this Self alone . . . He longed for a second." Or, "It desired: May I be many, may I grow forth." Bṛihadār. Up. I, 4, 1. 3. Chhānd. Up. vi, 2, 1—3.

Here it is distinctly stated that desire (*kāma*) is the motive of creation in the Brahman. Deussen rightly draws attention to the fact that the law of works, whose fruits call for recompense, from the Vedānta point of view offers a further motive for the creation of the world. From an ethical point of view, however, it seems to be a rather questionable attempt to make the Brahman create such a world full of woe and

---

<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, p. 239.

misery only for the sake of amusement. What recklessness and cruelty is thereby imputed to this exalted Being! Nor do inhalation and exhalation offer a convincing analogy. For these are, of course, without a conscious motive, but not without a cause and an object. But it is to be admitted that this analogy agrees with the spirit of the Upanishads. For, according to the majority of the statements in these documents, creation is an emanation out of the Godhead, proceeding in more or less unconscious spontaneousness, like the process of breathing. How far this is consistent with the omnipotence and omniscience of the Brahman, is quite a different question. A being from which creation issues without its knowledge and without its will is neither almighty nor all-knowing.

#### THE CAUSE OF CREATION.

Concerning the cause of creation it is said in the very beginning of the Brahma-Sūtras: "*Janmādyasya yataḥ* = the Brahman is that from which origin, etc., is", *i.e.*, that being from which the world took its origin, in which it has its existence, and into which it is to return. Thus the Brahman is the cause of the world. Indian philosophers always distinguish two causes: the material cause (*upādāna*), as the clay of which a pot is made or the gold of which a ring is made; and the effective cause (*nimitta*), as the potter who makes the pot, the goldsmith who makes the ring. According to Śāṅkara and the whole Vedānta school, the Brahman is the cause of the world in both respects. As the effective cause it is named Īśvara, and of him it is said: "He considered, I will create, I will multiply myself." Śāṅkara is quite right in basing his assertion that the Brahman is also the material cause of the world on the statements of the scriptures (*śruti*). The difficulty how from the one spiritual Brahman, as material cause, such a multifarious, grossly material, impure world could issue as its effect, is left unanswered by Śāṅkara, who always has the expedient of Māyāvāda in store, *viz.*, the idea that the world

is only an illusion and that nothing really exists except the Brahman. But why then does he maintain that the Brahman is the material and the effective cause of the world? In two well-known similes of Ātmabodha Śāṅkara's doctrine is set forth in classical form:

In him, from whom they come, who sustains them all, in the highest Lord, all the worlds have their origin, existence, and dissolution at the end, just as the bubbles of foam in water (8). This whole universe truly is the Self only; apart from the Self there is nothing else. As pots consist of earth only, so the wise man sees all in his own self (47).

In the first of these two *ślokas* Parameśvara, the first personification of the Brahman, is said to be the material cause of the world (*upādāna*), "from whom they come". Likewise he is called the substratum of the world (*akhilādhāra*), "who sustains them all". That the individual creatures have their origin, literally their "emanation", from him, finds also expression in the simile of the foam bubbles, which consist only of water; and further in the simile of the pots: of clay they are made, clay they are, clay they become again. But if the manifestation of the one Brahman in the innumerable individual beings is mere illusion, it would be more consistent, and at the same time more honest, to say at the outset that the effective cause of this multifarious world is Avidyā.

#### IMPLEMENTS OF CREATION?

It does not sound very philosophically, when Śāṅkara discusses the question, whether the Brahman, in the work of creation, had implements at his disposal, as for instance, the potter has his tools? In answer to this he observes that the process of creation rather resembles the formation of cream out of milk; that the whole process is brought about by the specific nature of the substance. That means, it is in the nature of the Brahman to produce the world out of itself, and creation is quite a natural process. But in order to make this multiform world comprehensible, Śāṅkara assumes all sorts

of forces in the Brahman, by means of which it creates the world:

That the uniform Brahman produces the multiform expansion (*prapañcha*) of phenomena, becomes comprehensible from the fact that it connects itself with multiform forces.<sup>1</sup>

The Brahman is, therefore, called *paripūrṇaśāktika*, i.e., quite full of forces. But whence do these multiform forces come in the simple Brahman, which is really nothing but pure existence? Here we are brought face to face with the notion of Avidyā-Māyā. Śankara quotes Śvetāśvatara Up. I, 3 (see above, p. 201). He, of course, finds Māyā in "the God's own power". She is pre-existent (*prāgavasthā*), he says, in the Brahman as the seed-power of the world (*bījaśaktyavasthā*), and such a dependence of the world on the Brahman must be assumed:

For, without it the creative activity of God is not possible, because an activity of a creator destitute of powers is not conceivable.... This seed-power, resting in the highest God and called the non-manifest (*avyakta*), is ignorance in its nature (*avidyā*), a great dreamless sleep consisting of illusion (*māyā*), in which the wandering souls lie, which have not awakened to their own nature (the consciousness of their identity with the Brahman).<sup>2</sup>

Māyā, therefore, as the seed-power of creatures, especially of individual souls, is in its nature ignorance, pre-existent from all eternity in the Brahman. But how can a being, which is ignorance, exist eternally in a being which is wisdom, truth, pure existence, and pure cognition? That is putting an intolerable self-contradiction into the essence of the Godhead, the essence of imperfection into the essence of perfection, absolute illusion into absolutely real existence. At the very outset the whole proud edifice of monism is shattered by this self-contradiction.

### THE EXOTERIC WORLD-PICTURE.

After these preliminary discussions Śankara proceeds to delineate the exoteric picture of the world in the spirit of the

<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *ibid.* p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 246.



Vedānta. According to Deussen<sup>1</sup> it is based on three passages from the Upanishads: Taittir. Up. II, 1; Chhānd. Up. VI, 2, 2—3, 4; Aitar. Up. II, 1. We have already considered the first two passages (p. 197 ff. and p. 190 f.); the third may be quoted here:

This world, truly, was in the beginning only the Self, the One. There was absolutely no second, which might have opened its eyes. It wished, 'I will cause new worlds to issue forth'. It caused these worlds to issue: *ambhas* (water), *marīchi* (beam of light), *mara* (death), *āpas* (water). That water is beyond heaven; heaven is its support. The beams of light are mid-air; the earth is death; the waters are those underneath it.

Śāṅkara does not make much of this passage; so much the more stress he lays on the former two, in which he finds the origin of the elements. Of course, the passage from Chhānd. Up. contains only the origin of three elements, *viz.*, fire, water, and earth; but Śāṅkara knows that ether and air may be supplied from other passages. We may admit this and also his contention against Kaṇāda that the origin of the ether is conceivable. We are more concerned to know how he understands the origin of the five elements according to the Vedānta. He says that without consciousness (*chetanā*) no activity (*pravṛtti*) is possible; but the elements are *achetana* = without consciousness. He finds a way out of this difficulty in the assumption that Īśvara modifies himself into the elements. He bases this assumption on Bṛihadār. Up. III, 7, 3 (see p. 212). According to this passage the Brahman as Īśvara would be, as it were, the soul of earth and consequently of all the elements; the inner guide, who effects and directs their motions and workings. If, for instance, water flows and fire flames, these are motions effected by the Brahman. Śāṅkara believes by this to have proved how out of the Self ether arose, out of ether air, out of air fire, out of fire water, and out of water earth. Ether, therefore, is the most subtle of the elements, quite invisible and most nearly akin to the spiritual Self; then denseness and grossness continues to increase, the most solid element being earth, which, Śāṅkara says, is in the Upanishads

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 247.

also meant by the word *anna* = food. When the elements return into the Brahman, they are dissolved into it in reversed order, or rather drawn into it as the spider draws in its thread. With these gross elements creation comes to its conclusion. As a whole it is also called *Prapañcha* = expansion, because in it the elements expand into names and forms, *i. e.*, into separate things.

But no organic creatures, no living beings have as yet appeared on the scene. How are we to understand the origin of these individual creatures? Here we meet with another series of emanations, which likewise flow from the Brahman and return into it at the end of the respective æon. All these organic creatures (*bhūtāni*, *prāṇināḥ*) from the gods down to the plants (*ābrahmasthāvaraparyantam*) are comprised in the name "individual soul (*jīvātman*, *kshetrajña*)." To the Indian mind it is a familiar thought that not only animals but also plants have souls, in proof of which the assertions of Darwin and other evolutionists are adduced by modern Hindus. Śankara, too, asserts that plants have souls and that they are places of enjoyment and suffering. As we have seen before, we find in the Upanishads the ideā that the Self lives in plants by means of their juice. Śankara also ascribes consciousness (*chetanā*) to them, which he tries to prove by the fact that they move and thus show activity (*pravṛitti*), as, for instance, the lotus flower wanders from one tank to another, and creepers climb up trees. Besides, growth in itself is motion. But on the other hand, compared with the animal, whose characteristic is free motion (*jāṅgama*, *chara*), the plant is a fixed (*sthāvara*) and immovable (*achara*) thing. The animal also, of course, has consciousness. Does not the cow know her own calf from among a thousand others? and cannot the swan (*haṁsa*) draw out the milk contained in water? These examples are, indeed, not required in order to show that animals have consciousness. They are, however, not sufficient to prove that animals have self-consciousness. And even our modern evolutionists will not believe Śankara's assertion that plants have souls endowed with consciousness. In reality what we observe in plants and

animals are motions and activities, regulated by the laws of nature and by the mysterious gift of instinct, and which are by no means originated by self-consciousness.

Relying on a Upanishad passage, Śāṅkara (following the Brahma-Sūtras) divides all living beings into the following four classes:

1. *Udbhijja*, beings born from the germ or by germination, *i. e.*, plants.
2. *Svedaja*, born from sweat (Deussen: damp heat); vermin.
3. *Aṇḍaja*, born from the egg; birds, lizards, serpents, etc.
4. *Jarāyuja*, born from the embryo skin, *i. e.*, viviparous: mammals and human beings.

It is more than doubtful whether this classification, and the conception of the origin of organisms on which it is based, can be supported by the results of modern science. The second class, "svedaja", involves the idea of spontaneous generation which science has not yet succeeded and will not succeed in proving.

Śāṅkara, in his Bhāṣhya on the Aitareya Upanishad (part v, conclusion), sums up the emanation of individual souls from the Brahman as follows:

(1) The starting point, from which the emanation proceeds, is the pure Brahman in the "fourth condition", beyond dreamless sleep.

(2) From it comes Īśvara:

By its connection with the false vesture, which consists of pure thought, it (Brahman) becomes the all-wise Īśvara, who sets the general, undeveloped seed-power of the world in motion, and who is called the inner guide, because he guides everything.

This is the Brahman in the condition of dreamless sleep (*sushupti*). As the aggregate of all individual souls it is called Īśvara, as a single individual soul Prājña. Its vesture, which consists of pure thought (*prājña* or *chit*), is called *kāraṇa-deha* or *-śarīra*, *i. e.*, causal body. The material world is in this stage of development represented by Prakṛiti, which, united with *chit* and Prājña, forms the vesture of the causal body.

## (3) The next phase is described thus :

The same (Brahman) becomes the being, whose distinctive characteristic is the imagination (*abhimāna*) of being itself reason (*buddhi*) in creatures that arise from the seed-power contained in the world, and which is termed Hiraṇyagarbha.

This is the Brahman in the condition of dreaming sleep (*svapna*). As the aggregate of all individual souls it is called Hiraṇyagarbha, also Sūtrātman; considered as a single individual soul it is called Taijasa, the glorious or shining one. This is the aggregate of the inner organs—reason (*buddhi*), mind (*manas* or *chitta*), and self-consciousness (*ahankāra*); of the organs of perception (*jñānendriya*), of the organs of action (*karmendriya*), of the vital airs (*prāṇa*), and of the subtle parts of the five elements (*tanmātra*). These together form the subtle, invisible body (*sūkshma-deha* or *sūkshma-śarīra*) of this being.

## (4) The third phase of evolution is described as follows :

The same (Brahman) develops into the being with the false vesture of the first body, which is born within the world-egg, and is then named Virāj-Prajāpati.

This being is Brahman in the waking condition (*jāgrat*). As the cosmic aggregate of all individual souls it is also called Vaiśvānara; considered as an individual soul by itself it is called Jīvātman. To it corresponds the gross, visible body (*sthūla-deha* or *sthūla-śarīra*), which is made up of the five gross elements.

## (5) Śankara knows yet a fifth emanation :

The same (Brahman) becomes the so-called deities, as Agni, *etc.*, which have their false vestures in earthly fire and similar phenomena. Thus it is also with the assumption of different names and forms by the Brahman in the different bodies which consist of false vestures (*upādhi*), from the creator (Brahmā) down to the creature.

It is not said distinctly whether the fourth emanation is to be considered as a further link in the same chain, and therefore as a fresh personification of the impersonal Brahman, or whether these deities belong to one of the three foregoing phases. In the first case these deities would form the lowest phase of emanation, and Śankara would here pronounce a very critical verdict on the Vedic deities, *viz.*, that they are mere personifications of natural phenomena without anything personal

behind them. As, however, the preceding phases of emanation possess no real, true existence, and as, on the contrary, the individual existence of those beings born out of the Brahman rests on the delusive vestures which envelop the absolute and only true existence of the Brahman with a magic veil, the question concerning the rank of these deities is of little consequence.

#### MONISM = ADVAITA.

In reality the visible world and with it the individual soul are identical with the Brahman, the absolute Self. As, however, the material world with its multiform phenomena and with all the plurality and mutual difference of individual souls obtrudes itself irresistibly upon our perception, the Vedānta philosopher must try to account for this fact. He does so by means of the theory of the three kinds of existence (see p. 124 ff.). According to this theory, the world of phenomena and the individual soul in its separate condition possess no true but only practical existence. It is, however, not easy and sometimes quite impossible to distinguish this latter existence from merely illusory and absolutely unreal existence. Both illusory and practical existence are described as unreal by means of the same similes. The notion of practical existence suffers from a certain indistinctness by which its untenability is revealed. The notion is constantly oscillating in the direction of mere illusion. It is in truth an expedient of the Vedāntists which cannot stand critical examination. Merely practical existence is an impossibility. Either a thing is, as for instance the world, or it only seems to be, as the *Fata Morgana*, or the sun and the moon seen in water. A third thing, between illusion and reality, which would be the one as well as the other, can only exist in the imagination of the philosopher who wants such a hybrid idea for the explanation of his artificially conceived world.

But with the help of this theory the Vedānta school tries to explain the existence of the world and the individual soul.

The individual soul is to be considered merely as a reflected image of the absolute Spirit, it is only *prātibhāsika*, a being which in its separate existence only seems to be: "In the same way, as, when one of those sun-images trembles, the others need not tremble also, thus works and fruits of one soul do not concern the others." But the reflected images of sun and moon do not really exist, they only seem to exist, whereas the individual souls feel, think, suffer, and act, each by itself, and are conscious of their separate existence. Śāṅkara explains this by means of the theory of Upādhis, the false, delusive attributes, which are ascribed to the Brahman. Through these the one, undivided Brahman reflects itself in the individual souls as a plurality. These, then, are for their separate consciousness dependent on the Upādhis. It is true that usually we, and occasionally also the Vedāntists, speak of a transformation (*vikāra*, *vivarta*, *pariṇāma*) of the Brahman into the world, as if it were developing through a kind of self-division (*bheda*) into a plurality of beings. This assumption, however, according to the Vedānta, is founded solely on Avidyā = non-knowledge, or ignorance, innate in man. Deussen, the eulogist of the Vedānta, admits frankly that the question of the origin of Avidyā is not answered in the Vedānta. He thinks it likely that it might be the consequence of the works of former births, and therefore the fruit of man's guilt. But man that acts and becomes guilty, and transmigration with all its sufferings, are conceptions based on Avidyā; they are only consequences of ignorance, and cannot also be its cause. Deussen comforts us by suggesting that non-knowledge being a negative idea, merely the absence of true knowledge, does not require an explanation, *i.e.*, a deduction from a known cause. In other words, Avidyā in its cosmic function, as the cause of illusory individual existence, is nothing but an unproved and unprovable assumption. It is on this assumption that the whole edifice of the empiric world rests, which Śāṅkara tries to construct and explain with so much zeal. Unfortunately this ignorance is very often a very hard fact in

individual men; but that is no reason for making it a cosmic principle of such enormous range. As a cosmic principle its existence and operation is unproved and unprovable, which means in our case that it is nothing. It means a veiled, but therefore not the less fatal, declaration of bankruptcy on the part of the Vedānta philosophy.

Now Avidyā works by means of the Upādhis, which themselves are her products. They are called *avidyākṛita* = created by non-knowledge, *avidyānimitta* = caused by non-knowledge, *avidyāpratyaupasthāpita* = placed opposite each other by non-knowledge. The result is that the Brahman is not distinguished from the attributes falsely ascribed to it (*upādhyaviveka*), by which fact the innermost nature of ignorance betrays itself. The Brahman thereby comes into a certain contact with the Upādhis, as a crystal with the colour with which it is painted; it is even soiled by them. But this contact remains on its outside; its nature is not changed by it. It enters into these delusive imaginations (*upādhyantarbhāva*), hides its true nature in them (*svarūpatirobhāva*), and its omniscience suffers a limitation through them, as is evident in the individual soul, which is nothing but the absolute Self veiled by the Upādhis. From the union of the Brahman with the Upādhis of Avidyā the personal emanations mentioned above result. The absolute highest Brahman (*parabrahman*), which is unconditioned (*nirguṇa*), becomes thereby the lower (*apara*), conditioned (*saguna*) Brahman, that is, it becomes Īśvara, the personal Creator.

The expansion of the material world seems to rest on the union of the Brahman with the Upādhis, though it is also considered as a direct work of Avidyā. But above all it is through the Upādhis that the Brahman becomes a human individual soul, Jīva, which is clothed with a body (*śarīrin, dehin*). The body indeed consists of these illusory vestures. This is illustrated by the example of ether. Ether is a uniform, continuous whole; even if it enters various empty vessels, it does not undergo a change of nature. Only a part of the

general ether is, as it were, separated. If the vessels are broken, these parts unite again with the general ether. The relation of the absolute Brahman to the individual soul is similar: the Upādhis are, as it were, the vessels which separate the individual souls from the absolute Self as parts of the same. If these deceptive vestures are dissolved, the individual soul is united with the absolute, universal Spirit. Everything, therefore, which individualises the soul is Upādhi: the inner organs, the organs of perception and action, the vital airs, the subtile body, and the gross body, which is decomposed in death. Apart from the latter the Upādhis, together with the moral determination of the individual soul (*prārabdha*), accompany it on its wanderings through all its births up to its dissolution in the Brahman. In the condition of waking and of dream-sleep the soul is in contact with the Upādhis; but in dreamless sleep it approaches so near to the condition of the pure Brahman that it is not troubled by the contact with these deceptive vestures. Śāṅkara's statements oscillate here between the exoteric and the esoteric point of view. On the one hand the outside world is the work of ignorance and deceit (Upādhi also means deceit); on the other hand we read in Deussen's book a long discussion, in which Śāṅkara tries to prove to a Buddhist that the outside world, as it is capable of being apperceived, has an objective existence. "What is apperceived cannot be non-existent." Thus the external world is and is not. The Vedānta philosopher with all the efforts of his ingenuity does not steer clear of this self-contradiction.

#### AVIDYĀ AND MĀYĀ.

We have yet to answer the question concerning the relation between Avidyā and Māyā. Are the two identical, or are they to be distinguished? We have met the two notions before, in the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad. There Avidyā has its place within the Brahman, and Māyā also seems to have its existence there, as "the God's own power". But even there it is doubtful



whether the two are identical. There seems to be no sufficient reason for this assumption, especially if we allow the word *Māyā* to retain its original meaning of "power", "might". It is a matter of dispute how the mutual relation of the two notions in the *Brahma Sūtras* and in Śāṅkara's commentary on the latter is to be understood. According to Dr. Thibaut<sup>1</sup>, *Māyā* and *Avidyā* are here interchangeable terms: "The Brahman is in relation to a certain force called *Māyā* or *Avidyā*, to which is to be ascribed the appearance of this whole world. This force cannot be called 'existent (*sat*)', for only the Brahman is existent; neither can it, strictly speaking, be called 'non-existent (*asat*)', for, at least, it causes the appearance of the world. In fact, it is a principle of delusion, the indefinable cause, by which the material world, including the various individual beings, seems to exist. United with this principle of delusion the Brahman is capable of letting the appearance of the world issue out of itself in the same way as a sorcerer by his inscrutable sorcery can produce the delusive appearance of animate and inanimate beings. Thus *Māyā* represents *Upādāna*, the material cause of the world."

We have seen before that Śāṅkara does not consider *Māyā* but the Brahman itself as the material and effective cause of the world. The identity of *Māyā* and *Avidyā* in the *Brahma Sūtras* is contested by Major G. A. Jacob: "After a careful perusal of the whole *Bhāṣya* (Śāṅkara's commentary) for this particular purpose, I have come to the conclusion that the above description of *Māyā* is incorrect; that the word *māyā* is nowhere used by Śāṅkara as a synonym of *avidyā*, but that it is explicitly said that *Māyā* is produced by *Avidyā*, and that he in no sense considers the former as the cause of the world." In proof of this Major Jacob quotes several passages from the *Bhāṣya*, from which it is evident that *māyā* doubtless means a delusive apparition, which comes and goes like the phantoms

---

<sup>1</sup> Thibaut, *Vedānta Sūtra I*, p. 25; comp. G. A. Jacob, *The Vedāntasāra, Sanskrit Text*, p. 5.

of a dream. Major Jacob admits that in later times the word has a different meaning: "In Sāyaṇa's Pañchadaśī she is considered as a companion of Īśvara, whereas Avidyā is the companion of Jīva." But this usage points to the fact that Avidyā is originally ignorance in man, which throws on the Brahman the shadow of Māyā, so that both the expansion of the material world (*prapañcha*) and the individual soul, wrapped in the Upādhis, appear. But the self-contradiction in the system becomes so much more evident. How can the subjective ignorance of the individual soul be the cause of the soul separating itself from the absolute Self into individual existence, by means of the creations of ignorance, *i.e.*, the Upādhis, when, as we have seen, individual existence must precede the existence of Avidyā?

In Vedāntasāra, Avidyā is called *ajñāna* = ignorance, non-knowledge. Apart from this its description agrees with that of Avidyā:

Ignorance is a thing which can be described neither as existent nor as non-existent; a being, provided with the three components and opposed to knowledge. Its actual existence, they say, results from the experience, "I am ignorant" — and also from words of the scriptures as Śvetāśv. Up. I, 3. 4 (see above, p. 201). *Vedāntasāra VI.*

Here Ajñāna, ignorance, is identified not only with Māyā, but also with Prakṛiti, and the three components of this material cause of the world are ascribed to it, as in the Bhagavad-gītā. The fact that neither existence nor non-existence is ascribed to it, must be understood to mean that it belongs to the sphere of illusion or mere practical existence. Its subjective character becomes evident from its origin; from the subjective lack of knowledge the actual existence of Ajñāna as a cosmic principle is inferred. It has, however, like all the products which result from the union of Avidyā with the Brahman, a twofold form of existence:

This ignorance is designated as a unity or as a multiplicity, according as it is considered as an individual (*vyasṭi*) or as an aggregate (*samashṭi*). Just as the word "wood" is used for a collection of trees, or as a collection of water is called a lake. *Vedāntasāra VII.*

This ignorance as an individual is to be compared to a tree, and as an aggregate of the ignorance of all individual souls it is to be compared to a forest. According to this formula the author draws a picture of the world, which in its essential features agrees with that drawn by Śāṅkara. It is, however, so much encumbered with details and technicalities that we cannot here reproduce it. But we may take a feature or two to supplement the picture of the world drawn by Śāṅkara; in doing which we must, however, always remember that we have an exoteric picture of the world before us.

According to Vedāntasāra, ignorance accomplishes its work by means of two forces:

Ignorance has two powers, *viz.*, that of envelopment (*āvaraṇaśakti*) and that of projection (*vikshepaśakti*). The power of envelopment is so great that, as a little cloud, by obscuring the spectator's field of vision, overspreads, as it were, the whole disk of the sun, which is innumerable miles distant, so also ignorance, though limited, by veiling the intellect of the spectator, veils, as it were, the Self, which yet is unlimited and unconnected with the universe. As it is said in an aphorism: "As the fool, when a cloud covers his eyes, thinks the sun is veiled and has lost its splendour, so I am that Self, which to him whose eye is blind, seems to be fettered, but whose nature is perception" (*Haṣṭimalaka*). To that Self, inasmuch as it is limited by this power of envelopment, activity and enjoyment seem to belong as well as the pleasures and pains and the infatuation of this worthless mundane life, just as a rope whose true nature is veiled through ignorance appears to be a snake. *Vedāntasāra* X.

This power of ignorance, therefore, veils the mental eye of the individual soul so that it thinks the Upādhi vestures are realities, whereas they are likewise products of ignorance, and the eye cannot penetrate to the true nature of the Brahman. This error is as unfounded, but also as comprehensible, as if a person in the dark thinks a rope, lying in the way, to be a snake.

The second power is thus described:

The power of projection is so great that just as ignorance concerning a rope by its own power makes a snake, *etc.*, of the rope, so ignorance, by means of its power of projection, raises ether and the rest of the five elements in the Self. As it is said in an aphorism: "The power of projection creates the universe, from the subtle body down to the globe of the earth" (*Vākyasūtra* 13). *Vedāntasāra* X.

With this second power, therefore, ignorance produces its deceptive creations, which the deluded individual soul thinks to be a real world, and puts them, as it were, into the Brahman. Thus the author can declare that the consciousness of man together with this ignorance is the effective and material cause of the world; consciousness being more the effective and ignorance more the material cause. In other words, the world owes its existence to an enormous error, in which every individual and the totality of all are implicated. Elsewhere also Īśvara is designated as the cause of the universe:

This collective ignorance having that which is most excellent for its vesture (*upādhi*), has pure goodness as its chief quality. Consciousness, having it as its vesture, has the qualities of omniscience, omnipotence, and universal control; it is manifest and called the internal ruler, the cause of the universe, and Īśvara, because it illumines the totality of all ignorance. *Vedāntasāra VII.*

As, however, Īśvara is not a person but only a personification, there is here no contradiction. "Consciousness connected with ignorance" is the same as "the aggregate of ignorance veiling as a false vesture that which is most excellent". It is playing with abstractions without any reality behind them.

We have before (see p. 197 ff.) in Tait. Up. II, 1 become acquainted with five Selves, sheathed one in the other, *i.e.*, five manifestations of the absolute Self. It is on this conception that the doctrine contained in the Vedāntasāra of the five sheaths (*kośa*) of the Self is based. On the main these five sheaths are identical with the five Upādhis, and the three different bodies, with which we are already acquainted.

(1) In order from within to the outside the first of these sheaths is that consisting of delight or bliss (*ānandamayakośa*):

The totality of ignorance, being the cause of all things, forms the causal body (*kāraṇaśarīra*) of Īśvara. It is called the sheath of bliss, because it is filled with bliss (the absolute Self), and envelops all things. *Vedāntasāra VII.*

Correspondingly, individual ignorance forms the causal body of the individual soul, and its sheath of bliss.

(2) The next sheath is that consisting of knowledge (*vijñānamayakośa*):

Intellect (*buddhi*) is that modification of the inner sense whose nature is certainty; the mind (*manas*) is that modification of the inner sense whose nature is resolution and irresolution. In these two (*buddhi* and *manas*) cognition (*chitta*) and self-consciousness (*ahankāra*) are included. These are made up of the goodness particles of ether and the other elements . . . Intellect (*buddhi*), together with the organs of perception, forms the sheath of knowledge. *Vedāntasāra XIII.*

(3) The third sheath is that consisting of mind (*manomayakośa*):

The mind (*manas*), together with the organs of action, forms the mental or sensorial sheath. *Vedāntasāra XIII.*

(4) The fourth sheath is that consisting of the vital airs (*prāṇamayakośa*):

The five vital airs are made up of the united passion particles of ether and the other elements. Together with the organs of action the five vital airs form the respiratory sheath.—These three sheaths (*vijñāna*-, *mano*-, and *prāṇamayakośa*) together form the subtle body (*sūkshma-śarīra*). *Vedāntasāra XIII.*

(5) The fifth sheath is that consisting of food (*annamayakośa*):

Consciousness, united with this aggregate (of the four kinds of gross bodies, corresponding to the four kinds of living beings, as distinguished by Śankara—comp. above, p. 240), is called Vaiśvānara and Virāj, because conceit is in all men, and because he beams in different ways. His gross body is the aggregate (of those four kinds of gross bodies). It is called the nutritious sheath, because changes of food are going on within it (of which it is also built up). *Vedāntasāra XVII.*

With this personification corresponds the individual Viśva, that is, “every one”, whose “sheath consisting of food” is identical with the gross body of every living creature. By means of these five sheaths, the first of which is identical with the *kāraṇaśarīra*, the three middle ones with the *sūkshmaśarīra*, and the outer one with the *sthūlaśarīra*, the absolute Brahman manifests itself in the series of personifications known to us: (1) Īśvara (aggregate) and Prājña (individual); (2) Hiranyagarbha, Sūtrātman, Prāṇa (aggregate) and Taijasa (individual); (3) Vaiśvānara, Virāj (aggregate) and Viśva (individual).

The last four of the five sheaths belong to the sphere of what we call the material world. The world, of course, is

likewise the product of Ignorance, in so far as the latter manifests itself as the power of projection, and produces false ideas in the Self, veiled as it is by the projective power of Ignorance. In this way the projective power of Ignorance creates the whole material universe :

From consciousness, united with ignorance, attended by its power of projection which is chiefly made up of the quality of darkness (*tamas*), is born ether, from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth. As the scripture says (*Tait. Up. II, 1, 1*): "Out of the Self ether is produced." The prevalence of the quality of darkness (*tamas* also = insensibility) in the cause of these elements results from the observation that there is in them an excess of insensibility. Then in ether and the other elements arise the three qualities of goodness, passion, and dulness (*sattva, rajas, tamas*) according to the qualities of their cause. They are called the subtile elements, the rudimentary elements, the elements not rendered fivefold. Of them are born the subtile and the gross bodies. *Vedāntasāra XII.*

Quite unmistakably the five elements, of which the material world is made up, are here said to be products of Ignorance, *i.e.*, things which have no real existence, but exist only as delusive conception. Further, the three components of Prakṛiti, which, as we know, belong also to Ajñāna and Māyā and are also called *apañchikṛita* = substances not made fivefold, are supposed to originate in ether. ~

Quintuplication (*pañchūkarana*) is the process, by which the subtile invisible elements become gross elements by being intermixed in a peculiar manner, the detailed description of which may be dispensed with here. The constituents of Prakṛiti do not, of course, correspond in number with the subtile elements, these being five and those only three ; but we have already seen how easily the Vedānta philosopher can make five sheaths of three bodies. In the same way he finds no difficulty in getting five primary elements out of three components. Thus these constituents form the bridge between the material world and the individual soul by furnishing the matter of which the subtile and the gross bodies with their organs are built up :

The subtile bodies are the bodies that have distinguishing characteristics, consisting of seventeen members. The members are the five organs of perception, reason, intellect, the five organs of action and the five vital airs. The five organs of perception are hearing, touching, sight, taste, and smelling. These

arise separately in their respective order out of the separate goodness particles of ether and the other elements. *Vedāntasāra XIII.*

This is to be understood in the following way: Hearing arises out of the goodness particles of ether, touch out of those of air, sight out of those of fire, taste out of those of water, smell out of those of earth; but those goodness particles are the respective subtile parts of these elements. These organs of perception are nearest to the spiritual nature of the individual soul, and the same is the case with the constituent of *sattva*, whose name places it near the only true existence. Therefore those organs are derived from this constituent, which is present in the five subtile parts of the elements.

It is different with the organs of action, which are more distant from the true essence of the soul. The organs of action are the voice, the hand, the foot, the anus, and the genitals. These arise separately in their respective order out of the separate activity particles of ether and the other elements. *Vedāntasāra XIII.*

Thus the voice arises out of the activity particles of ether, the hand out of those of air, the foot out of those of fire, the anus out of those of water, the genitals out of those of earth. The relation to the elements becomes here quite obscure and arbitrary. The relation of the organs of action to the activity particles in the subtile parts of the elements is clearer. *Rajas* means first of all "activity".

Finally, the constituents (*guṇa*) are present in the subtile parts of the elements not only in an unmixed state, but also in a state of mutual intermingling. Of such intermingled activity particles (*rajas*) in the subtile parts of the elements have arisen the vital airs:

The vital airs are respiration (*prāṇa*), inhalation (*apāna*), flatulency (*vyāna*), exhalation (*udāna*), and digestion (*samāna*). Respiration has an upward motion and its seat is the point of the nose. Inhalation has a downward motion and its seat is the anus. Flatulency moves in all directions and inhabits the whole body. Exhalation has its seat in the throat, moves upwards and is the ascending vital air. Digestion (the general vital air) moves in the middle of the body

and effects the assimilation of what is eaten and drunk. These five vital airs arise out of the mixed activity particles of ether and the other elements.

*Vedāntasāra XIII.*

The corresponding relations are, therefore, respiration and ether, inhalation and air, flatulency and fire, exhalation and water, digestion and earth (also called food). In this correlation, as in that of the five vital airs, there is an unmistakable arbitrariness to be noticed. We must, however, bear in mind that we have here not real substances, but delusive conceptions which all come from ignorance, and to which the Vedānta only from sheer necessity concedes "practical existence", whereas in reality they belong to the sphere of unreal illusion.

We are now able to draw up the monistic picture of the world according to the Vedānta in the following outlines, which comprise the whole range of existence :

(1) At the head of the whole, superior to all individual existence and to all change, is the absolute Brahman: existence, thought, bliss in the eternal tranquillity of the fourth condition beyond dreamless sleep. But beside, or perhaps within, this positive principle, there is also a negative one, called Avidyā or Ajñāna, non-knowledge and ignorance, and endowed with the powers of envelopment and projection. By its connection with the absolute Brahman the latter becomes the lower, cosmic Brahman, or it appears in three personifications, to each of which corresponds a body consisting of ignorance, and each of which may be considered as an aggregate and as an individual.

(2) The first personification results from the connection of the absolute Self with the causal body, which consists of ignorance and is identical with the innermost sheath of bliss. In this being is enclosed *chit* = consciousness, and Avidyā or Prakṛiti, the material cause of the world. From this originates the false conception of many individual souls, which, when considered as an aggregate, are called Īśvara, and, when considered as individual souls, Prājña. This is the Brahman, the absolute Self, in the condition of dreamless sleep.



(3) The second personification results from the further union of the absolute Self with the subtile body, which consists of the inner organs, the organs of perception, and those of action, and of the five vital airs. The subtile body is made up of the subtile parts of the five elements and includes the three middle sheaths which consist of consciousness, intelligence, and the vital airs. Considered as the aggregate of the falsely conceived individual souls, this personification is called *Hiraṇyagarbha*, *Sūtrātman*, and *Prāṇa*; considered as an individual soul, it is named *Taijasa*. It is the absolute Self in the condition of dream-sleep.

(4) The third personification rests on the further union of the absolute Self with the gross body, which is made up of the five gross elements and represents the fifth sheath consisting of food-matter. As the aggregate of all individual souls this being is called *Vaiśvānara* and *Virāj*, as an individual soul *Viśva* and also *Jīvātman*. It is the absolute Self in the state of waking consciousness, and comprises not only all men, but also all animals and plants, for it is the subject which experiences the sufferings of transmigration. In a certain sense this personification represents the deepest degradation of the absolute Self. But this degradation rests simply on the products of ignorance, and this being is, therefore, no less than the former personifications, a mere illusion.

#### ADHYĀROPA AND APAVĀDA.

The above picture of the world, however, is only exoteric; it is only offered to the uninitiated (*ajñāntin*); for the initiated (*jñāntin*) it only serves to represent the whole material world and all individual existence as a delusion, *i.e.*, to explain it away. The whole discussion is called *Adhyāropa*=imputation. This means that in this part of the Vedānta doctrine false attributes are imputed to the Brahman, attributes which do not belong to it and therefore must immediately be negated. *Adhyāropa* therefore is, as it were, the first or preparatory

course of instruction. The second, final course is termed Apavāda = denial, abnegation, refutation :

Denial (*apavāda*) is nothing but the assertion that the world of the non-real, beginning with ignorance, which represents only a delusive image of the real, is nothing but the real itself, as a snake which represents the delusive image of a rope is nothing but the rope itself. Therefore it is said, "A modification which affects the nature of the thing is called *vikāra*, a real change; but if the modification does not affect the nature of the thing, it is called *vivarta*, that is, merely illusory change". The same is the case here. This scene of enjoyment, represented by all the four classes of gross bodies; eating and drinking, which are destined for their enjoyment; their dwelling-place formed of the fourteen worlds, *Bhūr, etc.*; the egg of the Brahman, which forms the seat of these worlds,—all this is nothing but the elements rendered fivefold, which are the cause of these things. These fivefold elements, connected with sound (*śabda*) and the other objects of perception, the whole creation of the subtle bodies, are nothing but the non-fivefold elements, which are the cause of those. These non-fivefold elements, connected with goodness and the other constituents, and taken in the reversed order of their coming into existence, are nothing but consciousness connected with ignorance, which forms the cause of those. Ignorance and consciousness associated with it as with a false vesture and representing *Īśvara* and the following beings, is nothing but the Brahman, the fourth condition, consciousness (or cognition) not associated with a false conception, and forming the basis of those beings. *Vedāntasāra* XXI.

Step by step, in the reversed order of their origin, all the creations that have issued from the Brahman are here identified, the gross with the more subtle respectively, and thereby the real existence of all is negated. In reality there is absolutely nothing but the Brahman and this is everything. The Brahman is then said to be consciousness (*chaitanya*, meaning the same as *chit* = cognition) unconnected with any delusive vesture, consciousness, however, not to be mistaken for the self-consciousness of a personal being. With this entity then are identified *Īśvara* and the other two personifications, to which therefore only impersonal consciousness appertains, but not the self-consciousness of a person. Self-consciousness is on the contrary only a false illusion, called forth by the deceitful products of ignorance. Thus it may be said, "This whole universe is really the Brahman". *Chhānd. Up.* III, 14, 1; comp. *Vedāntasāra* XVIII.

## TATTVAMASI.

But this identification is not the last word of the Vedānta. For if two things are identified, real existence is in some way ascribed to both. Here this also is only a metaphor. The true meaning of *apavāda* is, on the contrary, that only by a gross error the Brahman is thought to be the world, as in the darkness of night a rope is thought to be a snake. That is the destructive error caused by Ignorance, which is the cause of all misfortune. In reality the rope is not a snake, but a rope. Therefore it cannot be said, the snake is only a rope. Likewise it cannot be said, the universe is nothing but the Brahman, or the individual Self is the absolute Self. The Brahman is only Brahman, and the world as well as the individual Self are not at all. So what we have here is acosmism pure and simple.

According to the Vedāntasāra, this is the only suggested meaning of the word: "The whole universe is truly the Brahman." With this interpretation of the Upanishad saying agrees also that of the other saying, "*Tat tvam asi*, that art thou", and of the other, "*Aham brahmāsmi*, I am the Brahman". The interpretation of the former assumes, indeed without proof, that the two parts, *tat* and *tvam*, have each two different meanings, a literal one, and one which is hidden and only suggested. The literal meaning of *tat* comprehends the following three points: (1) the aggregate of all ignorance and its products; (2) consciousness associated with this aggregate of ignorance as with a false vesture, to which, as being Īśvara, appertain the attributes of omniscience, *etc.*; (3) consciousness, not associated with the false vestures, *i. e.*, the pure, absolute Brahman; *tat* means these three things in their union, like a ball of iron made red-hot by fire. In its deeper and only suggested sense, *tat* is supposed to mean pure consciousness, not associated with any false vesture, and therefore the pure Brahman. Likewise *tvam* in its purely literal sense is supposed to mean: (1) Ignorance as an

individual, together with its delusive products; (2) consciousness associated with it, to which, as *Prājña*, only limited knowledge belongs; (3) individual consciousness, not associated with the false vestures — and all these three in close union, like a ball of iron made red-hot by fire. But the deeper and suggested meaning of *tvam* is pure consciousness, the absolute Self in its fourth condition, all-pervading bliss, therefore the pure Brahman. Thus the equation *tad* (that) = *tvam* (thou) is justified.

It is evident that the suggested sense of the two words is identical, but the literal meaning of the two words is not identical. As Brahman, the absolute Self, is invisible, and the individual Self visible, we may, according to Dr. Ballantyne<sup>1</sup>, put it in the following way: "The equation 'Self + invisibility = Self + visibility' is logically not allowable." The Vedānta philosophers, therefore, are ready with examples to prove how in similar cases the inessential point in such an equation, which contains at the same time the inconsistency, is simply omitted. Thus, for instance, they say that nobody finds the assertion illogical that Devadatta, the man whom we saw before, is the man Devadatta here present, although now, for instance, he is older. Or in the form of an equation: Devadatta (25 years old) = Devadatta (35 years old). Thus in the above equation inessential points, *viz.*, visibility and invisibility, must simply be omitted. Then there indeed remains the simple equation, "Self = Self". With regard to this we may observe that if we go on modifying the meaning of the two words *tad* and *tvam*, till both mean the same thing, then, of course, they must finally mean the same thing. But nobody can maintain that such an interpretation is logically allowable and tenable. Nor has it anything to do with the historical meaning intended by the author of the Upanishads. He simply meant to say, "Thou art the Brahman", that is, he wanted to identify the individual Self with the absolute

---

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Vedānta.*

Self. But here this is interpreted to mean: "The absolute Brahman art thou, O absolute Brahman."

### AHAM BRAHMĀSMI.

The Vedānta philosophers read a similar meaning into the other saying: "*Aham brahmāsmi*." The meaning of this statement is interpreted by means of the strange theory that through the mental comprehension of the "tattvamasi" a change of the mind and of consciousness is brought about, which then takes the form of the undivided, absolute Brahman, so that he who has received this saying in its Vedānta meaning, can say, "I am Brahman, the unchanging, pure, intelligent, free, undecaying, supreme bliss, eternal, without a second". Vedānta-sāra XXVIII.

With this the last word is said concerning the Vedānta conception of the world and man. It may be summed up in two words, "Tat tvam asi" and "Aham brahmāsmi". We need not quarrel with the Vedānta philosophers about their interpretation of these words, however artificial and forced it may be. They put into them what they want to teach, *viz.*, that the world and the individual soul are mere unreal illusion, and that the Brahman alone is everything. The monism of the Vedānta is not like modern monism, atheistic nature-worship, but acosmic pantheism. That is the strong point of the Vedānta as compared with the atheistic dualism of the Sāṅkhya school; but that is also its weakness, which must cause the downfall of the system. This absolute idealism, which dissolves everything into the impersonal Godhead, cannot do justice to the empiric existence of the world, which, in spite of being explained away by the Vedāntists, forces itself upon our perception as an insistent reality. Nor can it do justice to the consciousness of man, that he is a personal being separate from other personal beings. Neither does the Vedānta, with all its ingenuity and all its artifices, succeed in killing this feeling of individuality in man. The Neo-Vedāntists of

our own day do not venture to repeat the assertion: "Aham brahmāsmi=I am God," in all its harshness. They take off its sharpest point by saying that, whereas the Bible teaches that man *was created* after the image of God, the Vedānta teaches that man *is* God's image. This might quite as well be an expression of the teaching of the Bible. But the essence of esoteric Vedānta teaching is: "Man is God."

But this monistic idealism can never be maintained. The Vedānta schoolman, while he imagines he is drawing the last consequences of his doctrine and pronouncing the deepest mysteries of his wisdom, quite unknowingly and involuntarily relapses again and again into those exoteric views which he otherwise proudly despises. Take the last quoted sayings. With an audacity which to our Christian conscience is nothing short of blasphemy, they declare the absolute identity of the individual and the absolute Self. But even in doing so they treat the individual Self exactly as a separate being of independent existence. "The mind or the consciousness of the initiated takes the form of the undivided Brahman." Here the dualism of the individual and the absolute Self, so often disclaimed, appears in all its persistency. Or take, for instance, the following distichs from Ātmabodha:

The pious man possessing real wisdom  
discerns it clearly with the eye of knowledge,  
That in himself the universe is rested,  
and that he is himself the One and all things. (46)

A ball of iron is made red-hot by fire;  
so with its light, in which itself is beaming,  
The Brahman permeates all things existing,  
it permeates their inside and their outside. (60)

The Brahman from the universe is different:  
yet there is nothing different from the Brahman;  
If anything seems different from the Brahman,  
it is forsooth delusion like a mirage. (61)

Here, where absolute identity is proclaimed, we might expect language adequate to it, but instead of that "the whole universe rests in the pious man who possesses knowledge", and "Brahman is different from the universe, of a kind other than

the universe". That is the language of the exoterics, the ignorant. In other words, the dualism of God and world, of absolute and individual Self has not been overcome, neither can it be overcome in the way in which the Vedāntist tries to do so. This is best proved by the Vedānta doctrine of three-fold existence—true, practical, and merely illusive. This doctrine is again and again abandoned by Vedānta philosophers, in that they treat practical existence as mere unreal illusion. But if there is no merely practical existence, then the dualism of Brahman and world, of absolute and individual Self is a hard fact. The concession made to realism by Vedānta idealism with its "merely practical existence" becomes a backdoor, through which realism will come in again and again to assert its right as the master of the house.

This dualism becomes still more unbearable from the doctrine of non-knowledge, or ignorance (*avidyā*, *ajñāna*). Side by side with the absolute Brahman, where does this powerful, effective, pregnant principle come from, whose reality is denied in vain? It is in the nature of the Absolute to be eternal, unborn, and imperishable. If this, therefore, is asserted of the Brahman, this assertion at least is logically not inconsistent. But *Avidyā* is the contrary of the Absolute, and yet she is said to be unborn, imperishable and eternal like the Brahman itself. This is a complete self-contradiction. This dualism then becomes quite impossible from the fact that this other unborn, eternal, and yet unreal entity is placed side by side with the Brahman. The inconsistency could only be removed, if it could be proved that *Avidyā* had her origin in the Brahman. But the Vedānta shrinks from this, as the non-existent and unreal can never come from the only existent and real. If *Avidyā* is a mere delusion, she cannot have her origin in the Brahman. But if she exists side by side with the Brahman, as a principle of delusion, independent of the Brahman, we have the dualism of the Sāṅkhya school, an untenable dualism, which is thoroughly unpalatable to the Vedānta philosopher. For, by such a principle, the Brahman would be most fatally

limited in its absolute existence, in its absolute consciousness, and in its omnipotence, so that it would cease to be absolute.

In fact, Avidyā is one of those abstractions of Indian thought which have no basis in reality. She is simply an invention of the Vedānta schoolmen. But even as such she contains the admission that there is no bridge from the absolute Brahman to the real world of our experience. With the pre-supposition of an impersonal absolute Being it is impossible to understand the origin of this empiric world and especially of the individual Self in man. Such an absolute Being cannot create of its own free will. It would have to develop into the world, as is assumed by all pantheistic systems. But if it develops into the empiric world, into the personal Spirit, who exists in a plurality of individuals, it thereby ceases to be the absolute, for it is thereby limited on all sides. And as this self-evolution into the world would of necessity lie in the nature of the Brahman, and therefore be without beginning and end, such a Being could never have been absolute and never become absolute. Thus pantheism and also Vedānta pantheism are caught in their own trap. Their much vaunted monism becomes an impossible dualism with absolute necessity, the idea of the absolute is destroyed, and the origin and existence of our empiric world and especially of the personal Spirit remain an inexplicable mystery. Those of India's great teachers who were antagonists to the monism of the Vedānta have proclaimed this in clear powerful words. We have quoted the protest of Rāmānuja; but Madhvāchārya gives expression to similar sentiments:

The Supreme Lord differs from the individual soul, because he is the object of its obedience. A subject who obeys a king is different from that king. In their eager desire to be one with the Supreme Being the followers of Śaṅkara lay claim to the glory of his excellence. This is a mere mirage. A man with his tongue cut off might as well attempt to enjoy a large plantain.<sup>1</sup>

Here we have a protest against the monism of the Vedānta from the standpoint of practical morality, which has lost none

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 131.



of its force and validity. Madhva is justly indignant that sinful, mortal men should claim for themselves the glory of the Supreme Being, by saying, "*Aham brahmāsmi*". He is also right in maintaining that there can be no obedience to God, to which he and all morally healthy men feel bound, and that there can be no practical morality, if the deep difference between God and man is not maintained. It is to the credit of the strong moral sentiment of those men that they had the courage rather to confess themselves votaries of dualism, than to do homage to a conception of the world which deprives practical morality of its only basis. With the severity of a mind which, on account of its healthy moral sentiment, has full assurance of the truth of its convictions, Madhvāchārya interprets the celebrated "Tattvamasi" in the following way:

Like a bird and the string; like the juices of various trees; like rivers and the sea; like fresh and salt water; like a robber and the robbed; like a man and his energy; so are the soul and the Lord diverse and for ever different.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the origin of the world Madhva avows the emanation theory (*parīṇāma-vāda*), which he rightly believes is found in the Upanishads. According to him, the elements of which the world is made up existed eternally in the Supreme Being. The latter is the Creator in so far as he lets these elements issue from himself, gives them form, and arranges them according to his will. But concerning the existing world he says, "There is a difference between human souls and God, and a difference between the insentient world and God". Of course, here dualism is not entirely overcome, and with this fact the untenable idea of the emanation of the world out of God is connected. It is the historical mission of these teachers to have set up a barrier against the tide of Śāṅkara's monism. And they will retain their significance in the face of Swāmi Vivekānanda's Neo-Vedāntism.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 131 f.

## II. THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD.

### 1. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CREATION IN ITS RELATION TO INDIAN VIEWS.

#### RAYS OF LIGHT IN HINDU VIEWS.

The Christian conception of the origin and the nature of the world including man is throughout determined by the Christian belief in God. If God is the one, absolute, personal Spirit, then the world must be His work, owing its existence to the free self-determination of His will. The Christian belief in one, personal God includes also the belief in the creation of the world by God, whereas it rigorously excludes every emanistic, pantheistic, monistic, and dualistic conception of the world. It is, however, not difficult from the Christian point of view to acknowledge a legitimate motive in the different views of the origin of the world and its relation to the Supreme Being which have appeared in the historic evolution of Hinduism. The search after a personal creator in the later hymns of the *Rigveda* and the attempt to realise his creative work appear to us Christians to have been a search after that light which was originally given by God to humanity. We find rays of this light in the traditions of all nations, and it would seem strange, if they were quite wanting in the religious sentiments of the Vedic Āryans. Christians can only rejoice, if they find traces of God, who by His almighty power created the world and who rules and preserves it as its king, having in those remote times of the Vedic Āryans not left Himself without witness to that people. This fact accounts for the groping and feeling after God on the part of the Vedic poets, which even in the *Upanishads* has not quite

ceased: a groping and feeling after the Almighty God, who has created heaven and earth, and men, animals and plants on the earth.

### LOST IN DARKNESS.

Unfortunately it cannot be denied that this ray of light is lost in deep darkness. All those reflections of the hymns on the creation of the world bear marks of polytheism. It is that very henotheism which, in extolling almost all the gods by turns as creators of the world, points so much the more distinctly to the polytheistic views which underlie these effusions. It must even be said that the endeavour to find a personal creator, has given birth to two completely new deities, Prajāpati and Viśvakarman, who were added to the already existing host of gods. To this endeavour of the Vedic Rishis the word of the poet applies: "Man will err while he strives." To this another error, as fatal as the former, is added. The gods themselves are considered to have been born and are involved in the cosmogonic process. And the universe is considered as an emanation from the Supreme Being. That is the deathblow to the idea of creation and of the belief in a personal God, for it involves the pantheistic identification of God and the world. The gods, which, together with the world and its creatures, have emanated from the Supreme Being, are dissolved again in the *aqua fortis* of critical speculation. They dissolve into that which, in one respect, they were from the beginning, *i.e.*, impersonal forces and natural phenomena. This is the consummation of monistic pantheism, which denies the personality of God, the creation of the world, the reality of individual existence and of human personality.

### A GOOD MOTIVE IN THE VEDĀNTA.

But there is not only a speculative, but a good religious motive even in Vedānta monism, which sacrifices the world and man to maintain the absolute Brahman. In order that the

Godhead may be all, infinite, unlimited, eternal, absolute, the Vedānta maintains that every thing that is not God is unreal and mere delusion. That is a motive which Christians must acknowledge as good to a certain degree. To them also in the presence of Almighty God, the absolutely supreme, unlimited Lord of the world, who alone is good, all created existence cannot be independent, for it can come only into existence through Him, can only in His will have the law of its existence, and can only in Him have its goal and aim. According to the Bible, the world and every thing in it, in comparison with God, is vain, worthless, and transitory. "The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. VII, 31). "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John II, 17). "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. I, 2). If the world would set itself in God's place, then also the Christian must renounce the world; if his own Self wants to occupy the place due to God, who alone is good, then also the Christian must deny himself and say to his own Self, Thou art nothing.

But nevertheless the world and the human Self are God's creatures, which have this value, that God has created them. And so far they have a real and, within certain limits, an independent existence. To declare the whole world and the individual Self of man to be the creation of a dark power (ignorance), which is independent of the will, power, and wisdom of God, would not be honouring God, who is unlimited in power, wisdom, and goodness, but would drag Him down into the quagmire of error. That would really amount to limiting the absolute God and reviling His work of creation. For the exercise of practical religion, *i.e.*, devotion to God, and of practical morality, *i.e.*, devotion to our fellow-men in the service of love, it is absolutely necessary to concede a certain reality and independence to creation in general and to the individual spirit in particular. In some way the Supreme Being must be responsible for man's creation. If the latter is declared to be mere delusion, then a dark shadow will fall on the Supreme Being Himself.

## SOME TRUTH IN THE SĀṆKHYA.

With regard to this a certain truth must, from the Christian point of view, be conceded even to the dualism of the Sāṅkhya school. This system also contains a principle of great importance. It is the distinction between Spirit and nature, God and the world. This healthy realism, which, in the cause of practical religion and morality, has found powerful advocates in India, will always assert itself in opposition to the monistic idealism of the Vedānta, and Christians must fully appreciate its power. Modern Hindus, too, we are glad to notice, are animated by such motives of a practical nature, for they want to bring about a moral and religious regeneration of Indian society, which however they will not achieve as long as they continue under the spell of the Vedānta conception of the world. From this point of view, neither the necessity nor the possibility of a moral reformation of the people can be admitted; for what exists at present is the result of the sportive union of the Brahman with Avidyā, wherefore it is absolutely necessary and immutable. Contrary to this, dualist realism, which from practical motives adheres to the distinction between nature and spirit, and in its later representatives to the distinction between God and the world, will always, to a certain degree, remain valid and true. Of course, Christianity cannot acknowledge the Prakṛiti of the Sāṅkhya system. Here we have again the dark power which would be a limitation of the absolute God, and which is as inadmissible, from a logical point of view, as it is unjustifiable on the score of practical religion. The absolute God can beside Himself tolerate neither unborn, eternal nature nor primordial matter. Neither can Christians acknowledge the Sāṅkhya conception of the individual Self. To them man is neither a soul existing from all eternity, nor a bundle of products of nature, but a creature of God, into whom He has breathed His Spirit as the breath of his life. Although we acknowledge and appreciate the motives of

all these views, we must, from a logical, moral, and religious point of view, absolutely disclaim the doctrines in which they have resulted. History in its course will, in spite of Swāmi Vivekānanda and Neo-Hinduism, leave them behind and pass on to better things.

### THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF CREATION.

Christians believe that they already possess these better things. The Christian conception of the world avoids all those fatal rocks on which both the Vedic ideas and the monistic and dualistic systems are wrecked. We have a uniform, complete, monotheistic conception of the world, free from dualism of any kind. According to the Christian faith, *i.e.*, according to the unanimous statements of the Bible, the world is not the creation of a power apart from, and outside of, God, with which God would have to grapple as best He could. Nor is it a product that emanated out of His own being by chance or compulsion, so that a part of God's being would become degenerate. On the contrary, the world, including man and all created spirits, is the work of God, called into existence by Him of His own will and in perfect freedom. This may be, and often is, expressed in a popular form by saying, God has created the world out of nothing. For while, as a rule, out of nothing comes nothing, it is God's prerogative to make something out of nothing, and that something very excellent and good. But from a logical point of view we must object to the form of this statement, because it might seem as if "nothing" were the source from which the world was taken, or the material of which God made the world. That would involve a self-contradiction, for nothing is nothing, and therefore it can be neither the source nor the material of creation. That statement is only intended to state that God of His own free will called into existence the world, which had not existed before, and that in so doing He did not make use of any material, which indeed did not exist then.

## GOD'S HOLY LOVE HIS MOTIVE FOR CREATION.

But the work of the absolutely good God, who is an almighty Spirit and holy love, can neither be mere play, nor a delusive expansion; on the contrary, His creation is the expression of His holy will. According to the Christian faith and the testimony of the Bible, God is so perfect and so absolutely unlimited, that without prejudice to His own absoluteness He can call into existence creatures relatively independent. But no necessity of any kind outside Himself, nor any blind compulsion within Himself, nor any want felt by Himself, induced Him to create the world, but only and solely His holy love, which in its very nature is perfect freedom. According to the Christian faith, all this is included in the fact that God is the absolute, personal, almighty Spirit and at the same time holy love. Therefore we can find the motive of His creative work only in His holy love.

In the Bible, which very frequently refers to the fact that God has created the world, it is not explicitly said that His motive was love. But it is implied in the word, "God is love". And it is sometimes most powerfully suggested in another form that His love induced him to create the world. The apostle John says of the eternal Word, the Logos, who in Jesus of Nazareth became man, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (St. John I, 1—4). By the name "Logos = the Word", the person in question is here declared to be the personal revelation of God, and, in v. 4, the bringer of divine life to men, *i.e.*, the One, through whom the highest boon, the kingdom of God and salvation, is given to mankind. Of Him the apostle says that He was the mediator of creation. By this the creation of the world presents itself as part of a much more comprehen-

sive plan of God for the establishment of His kingdom, in which the world to be created is to attain its consummation and mankind its salvation and moral perfection. This whole plan is summed up in the Logos, the eternal Son, who has also the carrying out of this counsel committed to Him. Now He is the "Son of love", and the counsel carried out by His instrumentality is a counsel of love. In His person and work, the love of God is offered to us men in a perfect form. This involves that even the work of creation, which was carried out through His instrumentality, had the love of God for its motive.

Similarly the Apostle Paul says, "Who (Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible. . . . All things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. I, 15—17). These statements stand in close connection with that other statement: "In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. I, 14). Here, too, creation and redemption form one comprehensive work, the carrying out of which is committed to the "Son of love", in whom God has framed the counsel of love for the whole order of the world. (Compare also Hebr. I, 1—3.) It is, therefore, not only an inference of reason deduced from the nature of God, but a truth well established in Scripture, and revealing itself in the whole work of salvation, that the personal God in creating the world was moved by His free, holy love.

#### RELATIVE INDEPENDENCE OF THE WORLD.

Now we might say that God, by giving a relatively independent existence to the world, has out of love put a limitation upon Himself. But that would be too human an idea, and too inadequate an expression of a truth which would be unquestionable, even if no perfectly adequate expression of it were to be found. To the Almighty God of love His own work



cannot be a limit. On the contrary, the independence of God's creatures moves within the limits laid down by the Creator Himself, and it lasts only as long as it is His will that it should. God does not permit His only good, righteous, and holy will, His absolutely wise intentions of love, to be frustrated by the will and conduct of His creatures, to whom He has given a certain degree of independence. The world created by God exists as long as He wills it. When it has fulfilled His purposes, it falls back into its former non-existence.

## 2. THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF CREATION. MAN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

### CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

In the first chapter of the Bible the conception of the origin of the world, which is in accordance with the Christian faith, is presented in majestic simplicity. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i, 1). In the beginning, that is, when the world began to be, whereas previously it was not. With the world also *time* began, which is nothing but the form in which the conception of one thing following another, the succession of created things, enters our consciousness. In so far the word of St. Augustine, "The world was created in and with time," holds good even now. "Heaven and earth," that means the whole visible world, in which man finds himself placed. It has been supposed by some that the word *heaven* involves the inhabitants of the invisible world, who in the Scripture are called angels; and as the angels are not divine beings, as some Hindus interpret the word in order to excuse the popular Indian belief in three hundred and thirty-three millions of gods, but created spirits, servants of God (Ps. ciii, 20. 21; Ps. civ, 4; Hebr. i, 13. 14), there is no objection to that assumption. Heaven and earth then are

the totality of all that was created. The word "created" finds its interpretation in the following account, in which it is described how and in what order God created the world.

### THE RESTITUTION THEORY.

"And the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1, 2). The words "waste and void" denote a state yet unordered and unanimated, a chaos. Some scholars find in these words a hint that this chaotic state of the earth was preceded by a state of order, of light and life. Then the first verse would be the account of an earlier, and the second verse would begin the account of a second, creation. Between the first and second verses we should have to imagine the devastation and destruction of that earlier creation. This devastation of the first creation, according to the views of those scholars, would have been the work of fallen angels, with Satan, the prince of darkness, as their head. But there are important objections to this hypothesis of restitution, however profound it may be and however helpful it might prove in accounting for certain facts of geology. Would God have left the work of His first creation to those powers of darkness, which of their own accord would have proceeded to destroy it? And if God intended afterwards to call a new world into existence, was it not much simpler and worthier of God to rescue this first world out of the hands of the demons and to preserve it? These objections cannot be met by an appeal to the New Testament fact and promise of a new creation. The meaning of the latter is totally different from this hypothetical new creation. The new creation of the New Testament is on the one hand essentially a spiritual and moral regeneration and on the other hand a consummation of the existing world, which by means of that regeneration is to be prepared to partake in God's glory. But this hypothetical new creation would, in the main, be a restitution of the same creation, which had fallen a prey to

demoniac devastation. But what takes away every foundation from this hypothesis is the fact that neither the passage under discussion nor any other part of the Scripture contains the least allusion to the whole theory. We must, therefore, understand those words to mean that in the first place only the material of which the earth is made up, solid and liquid elements, were created and were then waiting for the command of the Creator, for order and life to be introduced into it. This, it seems to us, is the simple, natural meaning of the words, which is corroborated by the context.

#### CREATION BY THE WORD OF GOD.

"And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i, 2 *b*). The spirit of God means the ordering, life-giving, creative principle of God's activity, which moved over the chaotic matter, ready, as it were, for action as soon as God would command it. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. i, 3). "God said," with these words the different acts of God's work are introduced. Luther observes that God the Creator does not speak in words only, but in works. But speech is used by man to communicate his thoughts and to express his will. So also our narrative designates the whole creative action of God as a revelation of divine thoughts and as an expression of His will. As the psalmist says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. xxxiii, 6). Or, "For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. xxxiii, 9). Only frivolous, fault-finding persons can take offence at these simple, concrete expressions. We can only speak in human language of God's nature and work, and anthropomorphisms are unavoidable. These, moreover, are in harmony with the spirit and the childlike graphic diction of the Hebrew language, which speaks of God's hand, when we think of His government, and of God's foot, when we think of His presence. So long as realities and facts

correspond to these graphic anthropomorphisms they do no harm, and help us to understand the subject better. Only if there is nothing real underlying such bold metaphors, or if they are spun out in detail, they are in danger of becoming empty talk and lead to idolatry. The Old Testament, however, as we have seen, is in full accord with the truth that God is spirit and not flesh, and therefore not of human or animal shape, which might be represented as an image. And the words of God in our narrative are backed up by powerful, incontestible facts.

### THE SIX DAYS' WORK.

In the further course of the narrative, the work of creation appears as the work of six days. The account of each of them closes with the words, "There was evening, and there was morning, one day, the second day, the third day, *etc.*" As the third and the sixth days contain each two creative acts, the work of the six days falls into two groups of three days each. The first day brings light in general, the fourth day brings the luminaries in the visible sky, so that the importance of light for creation is brought into bold relief. Of the first day's work we read, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night". The second day's work separates the waters below from the waters above. Through this division a "firmament" appears, which, according to the Hebrew, means an extension, a space between the collection of water. The mid-air suggests itself as the simplest meaning of the term. The third day's work is accomplished in two acts, the first of which, as another step towards the differentiation of the chaotic mass, divides the oceans from the continents, whereas the second act produces the vegetable kingdom, and thus introduces the organic principle, the promise of life, into the dead matter of the earth. With the fourth day's work we enter upon the second group of creative acts. This act sets

sun, moon, and stars in the sky, which give man the measures of time, the means of knowing the four points, and which are the sources of light to the earth. The fifth day's work introduces life into the two oceans separated on the second day, *i.e.*, the ocean of air and the ocean of water—the creatures that live in water and the birds that live in air are created. The sixth day corresponds to the third, for it also contains two acts of creation, the first of which produces all kinds of animals on the earth, and the second is devoted to the creation of man. After each day's work God's eye rests with pleasure upon His works, for they are good, very good. And even now it is the privilege of man and the province of science to try and find out the goodness of God's works, and the law, order, and purpose of all that is created, and to recognise the wisdom and goodness of the Creator reflected in creation.

#### THE CREATION OF MAN; THE IMAGE OF GOD.

The narrative with special care describes the creation of man, in which at the same time the true nature and the destiny of man are revealed. The other creatures arise from earth, air, and sea at the simple command of God; they are merely taken from the earth, belong to it, and return to it when they have fulfilled their purpose. It is not so with man. His body, indeed, is also taken from the earth. But it is suggestive of deep meaning that His creation is preceded by a special council of God, which already reveals to us the nature of man about to be created. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. I, 26). In the meaning of the author, God here consults with beings whom, in contradistinction to earthly creatures, He takes together with Himself by the word, "Let us". This seems to mean the heavenly spirits, the angels, which surround the throne of God. Compare

also Gen. III, 22: "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil"—and Gen. XI, 7. Man is to be created in the image, after the likeness of God and those heavenly spirits. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Gen. I, 27). Now the question arises, What is the meaning of this image of God in which God created man? The meaning of the narrative cannot possibly be that the body of man was an imitation of the bodily shape of God. Our author had no intention to ascribe a bodily form to God. For if anything is certain, it is this that our author knew the decalogue and was imbued with the spirit of Old Testament revelation. But then he must also have known the divine command strictly forbidding image-worship; he must have known that God is spirit and that no bodily form must be attributed to Him. But we may, as an interpretation of the divine image, compare the supplementary parallel narrative of the following chapter: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. II, 7). Thus, as regards the body, man comes from below and so far belongs to the rest of natural creation. But what gives him his life and his unique nature is a spiritual breath from God. That is the other side of man, in virtue of which he belongs to the upper world of heavenly spirits. That he is a personal being, that he has a spirit as God is spirit, that is the image of God in man. The chief characteristic of personality is self-consciousness, on which not only all intellectual faculties rest, but also moral freedom, the capacity of and destiny for moral perfection, for the realisation of holiness, righteousness, and love, as God is holy love. That man is created a personal being with a self-conscious spirit and free self-determination, that above all is what is meant by the image of God.

It is certain that the narrative does not mean to say that man, created in the image of God, issued out of His hand an absolutely perfect being, as regards moral perfection, needing

neither development nor growth in what is good. If such had been the case, the divine commandment and the temptation connected with it would have been to no purpose. But it is just as certain that man was good when he came out of the Creator's hand; therefore there could have been no moral taint or blemish in primeval man. He could not have been God's image, if he had not been also morally good. But this inborn moral perfection was not like the unfolded flower, but like the bud, which, of course, has the perfect flower and even the perfect fruit in it, but has yet to develop. By this feature the biblical narrative does not drag man down to the level of brute beasts, nor does it lift him up to divinity. In a perfectly simple and dignified manner it tells how man was endowed by God with self-consciousness and self-determination, and was gifted with a disposition to which godlike ethical perfection was possible. These very endowments, however, involved the task of humbly receiving God's further gifts, and employing them in faithfully doing the work committed to him.

The body of man therefore is not in itself the image of God. But, as certainly as the personality of a man expresses itself in his bodily appearance, the body of man was from the beginning not only the suitable organ of the soul, but also the visible representation of the ethical image of God in his personality. Therefore man is distinguished from all other creatures by his erect form with his eyes turned to heaven, by his foot admirably suited to that attitude, by his hand capable of all kinds of work and artistic occupation, and by his eye revealing the rich life of a self-conscious, intelligent soul. Man's dominion over the animals and all earthly creation is likewise not itself the image of God, but, as is distinctly emphasised by the narrative itself, an outcome of the same.

## MAN THE CROWN OF CREATION.

With the creation of man the creative work of God comes to its conclusion. From the beginning man was the goal of God's creative work. In spite of all the objections of modern naturalism we may confidently designate man as the crown of creation, and may appeal to experience for corroboration. Man behaves, and the animals recognise him, as the earthly lord of creation. This is simple fact. But according to the will of God, he is not only to subdue and rule the creatures below him, but as a creature akin to God he is to know the Creator, to live in communion with Him, and to glorify Him. In spite of all failures and aberrations on the part of mankind, in spite of all judgements which have come and will yet come upon the human race, history bears witness that humanity moves towards the goal put before it in the biblical narrative of creation. In that respect this narrative contains a prophetic word: "Replenish the earth and subdue it"—such is the Creator's blessing on mankind (Gen. 1, 28). The law and goal of the development of civilisation cannot be expressed in a more simple and appropriate way. To-day we see this work being accomplished before our eyes.

## THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE AND SCIENCE.

The biblical narrative of creation has often been compared with the account which science endeavours to give of the development of the world and of earthly existence. If this is to be done successfully or with the hope of reliable results, the account of science ought first to be written completely and in a definite form. But it is not too much to say that as yet this is by no means the case. On the whole it is doubtful if science will ever be able to produce an account of creation absolutely reliable in all its details or at least approved by the majority of scientific authorities. We do not, of course, deny that certain results of science bearing on this subject have been



established with a tolerable amount of probability. But if to-day science from its point of view were to write an account of creation analogous to the biblical narrative, a great part of it would have to be made up of hypotheses. For this reason alone a comparison of the two documents would be useless. But there is yet another objection to such a comparison. The biblical narrative does not profess to impart scientific knowledge, but religious truth based on divine revelation. It is not the way of God's revelation to anticipate scientific research and to communicate its results beforehand. Science ought to be thankful for this, for else its discoveries would be devoid of their charm and glory; and science ought to show its gratitude by acknowledging the value of biblical account in its own sphere and for its own purpose. If the scientific account of the creation had been written in a trustworthy way, we might say the two accounts would describe the same thing, each from a different point of view, and that the one would be the supplement of the other. For the present, suffice it to say that the biblical narrative does in no way interfere with science, but gives it the freest scope, as far as it confines itself to investigating and describing nature, and does not at the same time encroach upon the sphere of philosophy. On the other hand, the biblical narrative teaches us truths which science by itself would never discover and which can never clash with the proved results of science.

As yet, science cannot give the faintest shadow of information concerning the origin of matter. It must, as yet, refrain from fully explaining the origin of organic matter and life out of inorganic matter. It has, further, by no means succeeded in explaining the origin of self-consciousness in man, by which he is supposed to have risen out of and above the animal world. Science has, as yet, not been able to prove the origin and evolution of the different classes of animals and plants out of protoplasm, and the development of the human organism. Instead of proofs it offers quite a number of hypotheses in the so-called Darwinian theory, at whose dissolution we now

see science sedulously at work. Ere long these hypotheses will be buried to make room for fresh research and fresh hypotheses. The biblical narrative of the creation solves all those mysteries by the command of the Almighty Creator, "Let there be!" If we once believe in an Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, there is no difficulty whatever in believing that at His command there came into existence matter consisting of innumerable centres of energy; organic life, in which also intellectual principles and powers reveal themselves; then the different classes of that life; and lastly man with his wonderful organism and his more wonderful mental faculties. It is this, above all, which the biblical narrative teaches us. It shows how God's work of creation proceeds from the production of formless matter to ever higher grades of creation, and through them to the creation of man, to come to its conclusion in this crown of creation, the image of God on earth.

#### CREATION AND EVOLUTION.

This narrative exhibits in this respect remarkable points of contact with the modern theory of evolution. If this theory, which also assumes a progress from the lower to the higher, and also allows man to be the end and aim of evolution, would keep within its own limits, there would be no objection to it from the Christian and biblical point of view. But above all, the idea of evolution must not usurp the place of the almighty, personal Creator. An idea can only be effective, if backed by personal power. An idea must first be conceived and then reduced to fact by a number of persons. Without this we know nothing of the working of an idea, and to speak of its working without this is nothing but empty talk. Further the theory of evolution would have to give up its foolish hostility to the teleological view of nature. It is in itself illogical and unscientific to talk of evolution and to deny the teleological tendency of evolution. In fact, those very scientists, who fight with such pathetic zeal against the teleological view of nature,

relapse into the same view again and again; for every organ, every organism, every observation of a fact causes them to ask, For what purpose? The theory of evolution itself rests on the idea of design in nature and professes as much by saying that every living thing up to man has developed out of protoplasm. Science itself, to a high degree, lives upon the question, For what purpose? Why then deny design in nature?

With regard to the descent of man from animals there is not only one link missing in the chain of facts, but all the links, and it would be only in accordance with the spirit of science to admit its absolute ignorance on this point. Some most prominent scientists have done so long ago and continue to say, "*Ignoramus, ignorabimus.*" At any rate it is much too soon for Christian theologians to bow down and do homage to that part of the evolution theory. If we had to deal with an indubitable and incontestable fact, Christians would have to acknowledge it, even if it was opposed to the biblical narrative, but then only with the reservation that it may yet be otherwise. But the theory that man's ancestor was an animal akin to our present monkeys is as yet an unproved hypothesis; contested by such eminent scientists as the late Professor Virchow and others. Christians are, therefore, justified in believing the statement of the biblical narrative, "God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him." But with the above restrictions the narrative is quite compatible with the evolution theory, as its main features agree at least with the drift of the narrative.

#### SOME DETAILS OF THE BIBLE NARRATIVE.

As for the rest we may spare ourselves the trouble of trying and making the details of the six days' work agree with the results of science. It is generally recognised that this account has not a scientific, but a religious character. We must refrain from showing that science also assumes that the first light which appeared on earth did not proceed from the sun, but

was a light due to electricity. Neither can we undertake to point out that the six days of creation did not last twenty-four hours but thousands of years. For though the Hebrew word for day may often mean a longer period in history, we cannot expect the author of the first chapter of Genesis to know that those days, which he says were made up of evening and morning, really mean geological periods. For him they are acts of creation, which he sees accomplished in an ordinary day each. But the form in which this truth reveals itself to him is not essential. The essential truth is that the world, as it is before our eyes, came into existence as a work of God, in successive order. In believing this we may confidently leave the geological periods in the hands of scientists, who do not mind a few millions of years more or less. On the other hand we must protest against the attempt of some modern Hindus, to cover the exorbitant number of their mythological ages by means of those geological periods. Science will dismiss those artificially made up figures with an ironical smile. Besides, the periods of geology, for the most part, refer to the time before man appeared on the scene of creation, whereas the figures of the Indian ages refer to the world of man. Modern Hindus ought to refrain from calling in the aid of science for the vindication of such mythological conceptions. For, if science should once submit them to its critical analysis, they might meet with the fate of the sorcerer's apprentice in Goethe's famous poem: "Master, my distress is great; the spirits I called up I cannot get rid of."

Finally, objection has been taken to the fact that in the biblical narrative the sun, the moon, and the stars do not appear until the fourth day, whereas, according to the hypothesis of Kant and Laplace, which has become part of the creed of modern science, they ought to have been the object of the first act of creation. To us this hypothesis is not an article of faith, but only a more or less plausible assumption, which is moreover rejected by some very modern and very prominent scientists. As, according to our views, the narrative purports to elucidate the religious side of creation, we need not quarrel

about such a point. It belongs to the temporal form, in which the narrative offers eternal truth. It was of much more concern to the author to emphasise that these heavenly bodies are simply God's creatures. And it was of the utmost importance that in the midst of nations who worshipped them as gods Israel should see in those heavenly luminaries the works of God and should worship not them but their Creator. It seems to us that this truth retains its great significance also in a country like India, where from time immemorial down to our own day the sun is worshipped as a deity.

#### THE BIBLE NARRATIVE AND OTHER COSMOGONIES.

The only legitimate comparison is that which compares the conceptions and myths of other nations about creation with the biblical narrative. We have tried to reproduce the conceptions to be found in the documents of Hinduism. Compared with this chaos of vague and confused ideas, the quiet, gradual progress, the inner unity, and the chaste simplicity of the biblical narrative, which offers in the plainest words the highest eternal truths, stand forth in bold relief. We may also compare the cosmogonies of other nations with this simple narrative, and we shall ask with astonishment how it is that this account alone avoids the extravagances which disfigure those myths. Christians know that they owe this to the revelation of God and the light of His Spirit. And this influence of God's Spirit appears not only in what the narrative says, but also in what it does not say.

### 3. PRESERVATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

#### GOD THE RULER AND SUSTAINER OF THE WORLD.

To the Christian faith it is a matter of course that God preserves the works He has created, and that for this end He rules the world as its king. Only if God were an impersonal entity, would it be possible to think that the world, which owes to Him its existence, should be left to itself? According to the Christian faith, which teaches the existence of a personal God, this would be contrary to both His all-ruling spiritual nature and His holy love. Therefore, even in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, the praise of God's preservation and government of the world finds repeated expression. Read, for instance, Psalm CIV, which praises God's glory in creation as well as God's goodness in sustaining His creatures :

These wait all upon thee,  
That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.  
That thou givest unto them they gather ;  
Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.  
Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled :  
Thou takest away their breath, they die,  
And return to their dust.  
Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created ;  
And thou renewest the face of the ground.  
Let the glory of the Lord endure for ever :  
The Lord shall rejoice in his works. *Ps. CIV, 27—31.*

#### CREATION AND PRESERVATION.

The question has been asked, whether the preservation of the world should not be considered simply as a continuation of creation. At the first glance this seems to be plausible: creation would then mean only the beginning of God's general work. But according to the Bible the work of creation is finished, at least so far as the world of man is concerned: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the

host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (Gen. II, 1. 2). But also from a more general point of view we come to the conclusion that the work of creation is finished. No new production of creatures takes place now. Of course, in the created world there is not only existence, but also coming into existence. But by this no absolutely new creatures are produced; it is only the operation and evolution of the potentialities put into creation by the Creator at the beginning. The production of new organisms is now no longer creation but generation, no longer a direct work of the Creator, but an application of the powers and capabilities which God has given to His creatures. The relative independence with which God has endowed His creatures is manifested in this. Natural processes have a certain independence, for they go on according to laws which are immutable. This is indispensable for the exercise of man's free-will. But it still remains an indubitable fact that God has not bound His own hands, and that through the laws of nature He governs the world as its absolute king.

#### THE OBJECT OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT.

God's government of the world has for its purpose the preservation of the world, the redemption of mankind, and the consummation of the world in His kingdom. Already in the Old Testament the eyes of Psalmists and Prophets is turned to the dominion or the kingdom of God, when they praise His supreme government:

The Lord reigneth, He is apparelled with majesty ;  
 The Lord is apparelled, He hath girded himself with strength :  
 The world also is established that it cannot be moved.  
 Thy throne is established of old :  
 Thou art from everlasting. *Ps. XCIII, 1. 2.*

The whole of the Old Testament is full of the praise of God's government. But often God's government is not

so easily visible to human eyes, so that God's people complain, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my right is passed over from my God!" (Is. XL, 27). While this is more or less due to their own sin, and the complaint is therefore unjustified, God's doings are often also a mystery to His saints and His servants, so that even the prophet says: "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Is. XLV, 15. And the pious Psalmist confesses:

But as for me, my feet were almost gone ;  
My steps had well nigh slipped.  
Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart,  
And washed my hands in innocency ;  
For all the day long have I been plagued,  
And chastened every morning. *Ps. LXXIII, 2. 13. 14.*

#### PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH GOD'S GOVERNMENT.

Those problems are here touched which at all times have especially troubled the saints, the faithful people of God. How does it agree with God's government that injustice and violence have their course, that evil continues on the earth and works out its consequences, that the unrighteous and the wicked so often are prosperous and victorious, while the pious, who walk in God's ways, so often not only seem to succumb, but really do succumb, either to misfortune or to human unrighteousness?

The really pious man, who clings to God in faith and obedience, will indeed in every particular case find comfort, when he, with the Psalmist, goes to the sanctuary and seeks communion with God:

Nevertheless I am continually with thee :  
Thou hast holden me by my right hand.  
Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,  
And afterward receive me to glory. *Ps. LXXIII, 23. 24.*

But even to him the general government of God is often veiled in riddles and mysteries:



Thy way was in the sea,  
 And thy path in great waters,  
 And thy footsteps are not known. *Psa. LXXVII, 19.*

With the acknowledgement of the secret character of God's doings the solution of the problem is given in principle. God's hand is there, though hidden, and must at last reveal itself in its righteous and holy government: "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Is. xxviii, 29). Evil, so far from being an obstacle, becomes on the contrary a means of God's government. It is the glory of God's government that He makes the evil, done in resistance to His will, the wickedness, the unrighteousness, the outrages of men, serve His own purposes for the furthering of His kingdom. The sin of men is thereby not excused, but the more energetically condemned. This has been admirably said by a man of the Old, and by an Apostle of the New Testament.

#### GOD'S GOVERNMENT AND HUMAN SIN.

After the death of their father in Egypt the brethren of Joseph, again moved with remorse, come to their brother with the request, "We pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." They, of course, mean the sin of having sold their brother to a foreign caravan of traders, who then sold him into Egypt, so that unspeakable misery came upon him. But with tears in his eyes he answered, "Fear not; ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. L, 15—20). God used the sin of Joseph's brothers as a means of His government to preserve the family of Jacob and many besides in the time of famine and so to carry out His plans of salvation. Thus He causes help and salvation for His people to grow out of the very sin of men.

In the epistle to the Romans, chapters ix—xi, the apostle Paul considers the greatest sin and the heaviest judgement

that came upon his own nation: the Jews have rejected in Jesus God's Anointed and their own and only Saviour, and have thereby called down upon themselves not only national ruin, but also the still heavier doom of hardness of heart in unbelief and impenitence. But with this judgement upon Israel the preaching of the gospel has come to other nations, and for those who believe free salvation in Christ, the entrance into the kingdom of God. And also for Israel itself that judgement is to be conducive to salvation. If through the judgements of God they become contrite and humbled in their hearts so that they turn to and seek their Saviour in faith, Israel as a nation will again find mercy, "For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. XI, 32). And then the Apostle concludes, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counsellor? For of Him and to Him and through Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. XI, 33—36).

This divine providence has reached its highest triumph in the history of Jesus Christ. After a short time of public service, which was an uninterrupted chain of kind actions to the suffering and the needy, Jesus succumbed to the ungodliness and fickleness of the people, to the jealousy and ill-will of its leaders, to the treachery of the own faithless disciple, and to the unprincipled compliance of the Roman judge, so that he, the innocent, the holy and the righteous one, had to die in shame and contempt on the cross. It seemed a complete victory of consummate evil over the most perfect goodness. But this triumph of malice was, according to God's providence, to become the means of salvation to mankind. On the third day, he that had been crucified appeared to his disciples as the risen Prince of Life, to charge them with the proclamation of his sufferings and death for the salvation of the whole world, so that all men might be made his disciples. And how

wonderfully has this charge now become a fact in the history of the mightiest nations, by God's providence, and we may say, by Christ's government of the world. To-day the mightiest monarchs of the earth bow in humble faith before him who was once crucified; thousands and thousands of repentant sinners receive forgiveness of their sins and eternal life from him. And even those who do not believe in him, cannot refrain from acknowledging him, nor evade his blessings. Here, above all, the most heinous sin of men, in God's good providence, becomes a means of carrying out His intentions of salvation to all mankind.

No other religion of the world rises to this victorious height, no other religion offers such comforting knowledge of the ways of God. Hinduism especially has not so much as comprehended the problems of God's government, to say nothing of their solution. Hinduism uses the facts in question to prove that the world, in which wealth and poverty, wrongdoing and suffering prevail, cannot be the work of a personal Creator, but only an illusion conjured up by Avidyā. And if philosophers proclaim ideas akin to the Christian conception of the world, they take them from, or owe them to, the Bible. But to us God has revealed this knowledge of His government through His Spirit (1 Cor. ii, 10).

PART III.

**THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL NECESSITY  
OF SALVATION:**

THE CONCEPTION OF EVIL.



## I. THE CONCEPTION OF EVIL IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

### 1. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN IN THE VEDIC HYMNS.

Evil is such a stupendous fact that no religion can disregard the problem. In connection with this question it must become clear whether the belief in God and the conception of the world of a given religion correspond to the real facts of human life. Evil, however, appears in two forms, *viz.*, as sin, and as suffering. A religion which denies or ignores evil in the form of sin cannot show the way of salvation to man. For men, and especially the best and noblest of men, are again and again confronted in their life with this problem of sin, and the question will arise how to obtain deliverance from sin, which is at the same time the worst form of evil. That religion which presents this problem most clearly and thoroughly and solves it not only theoretically but also practically and effectively, that religion alone deserves man's confidence. On the other hand, it is obvious that the notion of sin, if seriously and honestly conceived, necessarily pre-supposes the belief in a personal God. For sin is evil in its opposition to the will of the personal God and subject to His holy visitation. Where there is no faith in a personal God, there the idea of sin is dissolved into that of mere misfortune. Both in philosophic Hinduism and in Christianity there are definite conceptions of evil, to which the conception of salvation bears a certain definite relation. The notion of evil, therefore, is of decisive importance with regard to the estimate we have to make of the two religions.

## SIN IN THE VASISHTHA HYMNS.

In the Vedic hymns we find not only a vivid consciousness of sin, but also a healthy comprehension of the relation between sin and evil, which, strictly speaking, philosophic Hinduism has lost. According to numerous passages in the hymns, the evil which man does is a sin against a god and falls back upon him as a burden of guilt, which entails evil by way of punishment. Hence the numerous petitions for the remission of sin, addressed to Aditi, Varuṇa, and other gods; hence also Agni is implored to burn away, as in a flame, the guilt of sin. Whatever imperfection and incorrectness may attach to these conceptions, no unprejudiced judgement can deny that they reveal a healthy moral feeling in the Vedic poets, clearly shared by the people. This consciousness of sin appears most pathetically in the hymns of Vasishṭha in Maṇḍala VII of the R̥gveda. In a hymn the beginning of which was quoted above (p. 31) the poet continues:

- 2 With mine own heart I commune on the question  
how Varuṇa and I may be united.  
What gift of mine will he accept unangered?  
when may I calmly look and find him gracious?
- 3 Fain to know this my sin I question others :  
I seek the wise, O Varuṇa, and ask them.  
The one same answer even the sages gave me,  
surely this Varuṇa is angry with thee.
- 4 What, Varuṇa, hath been my chief transgression,  
that thou wouldst slay the friend who sings thy praises?  
Tell me, Unconquerable Lord, and quickly  
sinless will I approach thee with mine homage.
- 5 Free us from sins committed by our fathers,  
from those wherein we have ourselves offended.  
O King, loose, like a thief who feeds the cattle,  
as from the cord a calf, set free Vasishṭha.
- 6 Not our own will betrayed us, but seduction,  
thoughtlessness, Varuṇa, wine, dice, or anger.  
The old is near to lead astray the younger :  
even sleep removeth not all evil-doing.

- 7 Slavelike may I do service to the Bounteous,  
serve, free from sin, the God inclined to anger.  
This gentle Lord gives wisdom to the simple :  
the wiser God leads on the wise to riches.
- 8 O Lord, O Varuṇa, may this laudation  
come close to thee and lie within thy spirit.  
May it be well with us in rest and labour.  
Preserve us ever more, ye Gods, with blessings. *Rigv. VII, 86.*

The singer was certainly ill and in danger of death (v. 4). In that he recognises a visitation of the god Varuṇa, whose anger and wrath (v. 3. 7) he is conscious of having excited by his evil-doing. He thus recognises the latter as a sin against Varuṇa, as a trespass against the laws of the god. And so he asks pardon for wrongs committed recently and long ago, and not only for what he has committed himself, but also for sins of his ancestors which pursue him. The poet, indeed, in a truly human way, tries to excuse his sin, by means of which, however, we get more glimpses of the sins of which his conscience accuses him. They are sins committed while drinking and gambling with others, outburst of anger, probably while fighting, and the like. There is in the hymn something like an undertone of complaint about what is called "radical evil". Finally the singer promises new faithfulness in the service of the god, if he pardons him, and expresses the hope that the god having, through his superior wisdom, given him (the singer) new wisdom, new health and life will not fail to follow.

Another hymn by the same author probably had its origin in similar circumstances:

- 1 Let me not yet, King Varuṇa, enter into the house of clay,  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.
- 2 When, Thunderer! I move along tremulous like a wind-blown skin,  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.
- 3 O Bright and Powerful God, through want of strength I erred and went  
astray :  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.
- 4 Thirst found thy worshipper, though he stood in the midst of water-floods:  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.



- 5 O Varuṇa, whatever the offence may be,  
 which we as men commit against the heavenly host,  
 When through our want of thought we violate thy laws,  
 punish us not, O God, for that iniquity. *R̥g̥v. VII, 89.*

Here, too, we find the poet sick and miserable, perhaps shaken by fever. And he finds the cause in his offences against Varuṇa. In the refrain he asks for pardon of his sin, that he may not have to enter into the house of clay, *i.e.*, the grave. The last verse, which also occurs in other hymns, prays for the remission of his offence and of its punishment. In this hymn also the wrong that has been committed, is estimated from a religious point of view, as a sin against God. But the singer does not yet recognise guilt itself as the greatest of evils; he is only anxious to get rid of that harm which he recognises as the consequence and probably also as the punishment of his sin. The following part of a hymn, by the same poet, perhaps goes a step further; for here fellowship with the god Varuṇa appears as the highest boon, and sin as the wall of partition between God and man:

- 3 When Varuṇa and I embark together  
 and urge our boat into the midst of ocean,  
 We, when we ride o'er ridges of the waters,  
 will swing within that swing and there be happy.
- 4 Varuṇa placed Vasishṭha in the vessel,  
 and deftly with his might made him a R̥shi.  
 When days shone bright, the Sage made him a singer,  
 while the heavens broadened and the Dawns were lengthened.
- 5 What hath become of those our ancient friendships,  
 when without enmity we walked together?  
 I, Varuṇa, thou glorious Lord, have entered  
 thy lofty home, thine house with thousand portals.
- 6 If he, thy true ally, hath sinned against thee,  
 still, Varuṇa, he is the friend thou lovedst.  
 Let us not, Living One, as sinners, know thee:  
 give shelter, as a Sage, to him who lauds thee. *R̥g̥v. VII, 88, 3—6.*

The R̥shi here tells us of his intimate personal intercourse with Varuṇa. He had the privilege of accompanying king Varuṇa in the swinging sun-ship on a voyage through mid-air. Then he felt, "while the heavens broadened and the

Dawns were lengthened", for ever inspired and called upon to be a singer to the god. And so both continued to live in close friendship: Vasishṭha was freely admitted to Varuṇa's lofty palace with a thousand doors. But now the singer feels himself separated and far away from his god. He supposes this to be the consequence of a trespass against the god, and prays for remission of his offence and its punishment and for the renewal of former protection. Of course, it is not an inward, spiritual fellowship with the god which the poet prays for, but an outward intercourse of friendship. But in this he evidently finds his happiness.

#### SIN THE VIOLATION OF VARUṆA'S ORDINANCES.

Sin is understood in these hymns as the violation of Varuṇa's ordinances. He himself is the superintendent of these laws, and their avenger, if they are violated. In this he is assisted by his spies (*spāśaḥ*), so that no human offence escapes his notice. He thus appears in a hymn of the Atharvaveda, which more than once reminds us of Psalm CXXXIX, and in which, as in all these hymns, the heñotheistic tendency shows itself in a characteristic way:

- 1 The mighty Ruler of these worlds beholds as though from close at hand  
The man who thinks he acts by stealth : all this the gods perceive and know.
- 2 If a man stands or walks or moves in secret, goes to his lying-down or  
his up-rising,  
What two men whisper as they sit together, King Varuṇa knows : he as  
the third is present.
- 3 This earth, too, is King Varuṇa's possession, and the high heaven whose  
ends are far asunder.  
The loins of Varuṇa are both the oceans, and this small drop of water,  
too, contains him.
- 4 If one should flee afar beyond the heaven, King Varuṇa would still be  
round about him.  
Proceeding hither from the sky his envoys look, thousand-eyed, over the  
earth beneath them.
- 5 All this the royal Varuṇa beholdeth, all between heaven and earth and  
all beyond them.  
The twinkling of men's eyelids hath he counted. As one who plays,  
throws dice, he settles all things.

- 6 Those fatal snares of thine which stand extended threefold, O Varu-  
na, seven by seven,  
May they all catch the man who tells a falsehood, and pass unharmed  
the man whose words are truthful.

*Atharvaveda IV, 16, 1—6.*

The poet knows that Varuṇa, or we may say God, is omnipresent and omniscient, and that he will avenge sin. As his dominion and power extend over the whole world, nothing will escape his notice and his arm of vengeance will reach all. Varuṇa's envoys or spies, originally perhaps a metaphor for his omniscience, are continually on their way from heaven to earth; and so, if any one would flee from Varuṇa's punishment to "beyond the heaven", he would run right into his arms. He knows all the secret thoughts of human hearts as well as the counsel in the seclusion of a chamber. And everything wrong and sinful, especially falsehood and deceit, he will visit with severe punishment, throwing his threefold and sevenfold slings, perhaps diseases, round his neck. No other alternative, therefore, remains but in the fear of Varuṇa to eschew evil, and to implore his pardon for the sins committed. With reference to the numerous coincidences with Psalm cxxxix, it would be a mistake to suspect the Psalmist of having borrowed from the Atharvaveda, or the author of our hymn to have borrowed from that Psalm. No competent scholar would favour such an assumption, for it would presuppose either that the Psalmist knew Sanskrit, or that the Vedic poet knew Hebrew, both very improbable assumptions indeed. The similarities are easily accounted for by the deep sense of God's omnipresence, and by the vivid consciousness of sin in both authors.

It is, of course, impossible to quote all the numerous passages in the hymns which allude to sin and its guilt. On the whole these prayers, in which scarcely any one of the numerous gods is omitted, are very much the same in their contents. However, a few more passages, chosen at random, may be quoted:

Rich Lord, the mornings have gleamed forth in splendour,  
fair-rayed, fair-speaking, worshipped with all viands,

Yea, with the glory of the earth, O Agni,  
 Forgive us, for our weal, e'en sin committed.

\*                      \*                      \*

*Rigv. VII, 7, 10.*

I call, as such, the sons of bounteous Rudra :  
 will not the Maruts turn again to us-ward ?  
 What secret sin or open stirs their anger,  
 that we implore the Swift Ones to forgive us ?

\*                      \*                      \*

*Rigv. VII, 58, 5.*

What sin we have at any time committed  
 against the gods, our friends, our house's chieftain,  
 Thereof may this our hymn be expiation.

Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful danger. *Rigv. I, 185, 8.*

### SIN A SUBSTANCE CLINGING TO MAN?

Oldenberg<sup>1</sup> thinks that the hymn quoted above (*Rig. VII, 86*) was composed to be recited at an expiatory sacrifice. But it was also believed that redress might be made and the gods reconciled by mere prayers, as several passages have shown us. Oldenberg finds in *Rigv. VII, 86, 5* and in many other passages of Vedic literature "the conception of guilt as a substance clinging to man", to be removed by prayer or sacrifice (*avaya*) or washed away by *mān*, for which actions the help of the gods would be invoked. Concerning the passage just mentioned, Oldenberg admits that it speaks only of a fetter or a cord (compare above, p. 292). If with this the slings, which according to *Atharvaveda IV, 16, 6* (above, p. 295 *f.*) Varuṇa flings upon the violators of his laws, are compared, it will be admitted that this sling may quite as well be understood metaphorically, as the punishment sent by Varuṇa upon guilty man. But the simile is not appropriate to the conception of guilt as a substance clinging to man's body. It must, however, be admitted that other passages seem to justify Oldenberg's opinion, for instance, *Rigv. I, 23, 22* (comp. *Rigv. x, 6, 9*):

Whatever sin is found in me, whatever evil I have wrought,  
 If I have lied or falsely sworn, Waters, remove it far from me.

<sup>1</sup> *Religion des Veda*, p. 318.

This seems to be a gross conception of sin. But is it not even here more correct to say that the poet has in mind a magic power of water to purify from sin? Besides, we must remember that to the singers the waters are divine beings.

### AGNI BURNING AWAY SIN.

A similar conception is contained in a hymn to Agni, in which he is implored to burn away sin from man.

- 1 Chasing with light our sin away, O Agni, shine thou wealth on us.  
May his light chase our sin away.
- 2 For goodly fields, for pleasant homes, for wealth we sacrifice to thee.  
May his light chase our sin away.
- 3 Best praiser of all these be he; foremost, our chiefs who sacrifice.  
May his light chase our sin away.
- 4 So that thy worshippers and we, thine, Agni, in our sons may live.  
May his light chase our sin away.
- 5 As ever conquering Agni's beams of splendour go to every side,  
May his light chase our sin away.
- 6 To every side thy face is turned, thou art triumphant everywhere.  
May his light chase our sin away.
- 7 O thou whose face looks every way, bear us past foes as in a ship.  
May his light chase our sin away.
- 8 As in a ship, convey thou us for our advantage o'er the flood.  
May his light chase our sin away. *Rîgv. I, 97.*

It is to be remarked that the word which is here rendered by "sin" (*agha*) might just as well mean "misfortune". The word may have either meaning and both fit in with the context. But even if the meaning "sin" is here correct, it is not impossible to understand the refrain metaphorically, as meaning, that Agni, the messenger of the gods, by flaming up on the altar and carrying the atoning sacrifice to the gods, may chase away, or literally, burn away as a flame the guilt of sin, because by means of the expiatory sacrifice he induces the gods to forgive it. If sin here were looked upon as a substance clinging to the body of man, the sacrificial fire, in order to burn it away, must have touched the worshipper's body, which certainly was not the case. Also the expressions, "to sacrifice away", "to pray

away", by no means suggest this gross conception of sin. The most natural interpretation certainly is that the gods are by means of sacrifices and prayers induced to mercifully pardon sin, whereby the sinner is discharged.

Oldenberg bases his opinion on passages of the later Vedic literature, where, he says, the interpretation is no longer doubtful: "The priests put splinters from the sacrificial post into the fire, each with one of the following sayings, 'Thou art the removal by sacrifice of the guilt committed by the gods... by men...by the fathers...by the priest himself. For guilt after guilt thou art the removal by sacrifice. Whatever guilt I committed knowingly and whatever guilt I committed unknowingly, thou art the removal of that guilt by sacrifice.' Here it is also clear that what is called removal by sacrifice, is really nothing but burning away, *i. e.*, a purely physical annihilation of guilt without an imploration of divine mercy."<sup>1</sup> But even here the words in their real meaning may at the utmost suggest the idea of a magical effect of sacrifices. If the sacrificial fire was to burn away the substance of sin in a purely physical way, it must necessarily have touched the sinner's body. But admitting that these later texts contain a kind of physical view of guilt and a magical conception of the effect of sacrifices, does this prove the same for the hymns of the R̥gveda? It is much more natural to suppose that the originally metaphorical expressions "to burn away", "to sacrifice away", "to pray away" sin, in the course of time were understood in a grossly material sense, a process which, as we know, may be observed in most languages. The passages quoted by Oldenberg can by no means prevent us from acknowledging the fact that the Vedic poets often reveal a keen consciousness of sin and sedulously implore the pardon of the gods; for they are convinced that misery is the punishment of sin, and that no deliverance from misery can be obtained without deliverance from sin and its guilt.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oldenberg, *ibid.* p. 321.

## SIN IN LATER VEDIC LITERATURE.

This consciousness of sin can be traced even down into the Atharvaveda and the Brāhmaṇas. It finds expression in the charms contained in those texts, a few of which may be quoted here:<sup>1</sup>

If in thy folly thou hast lied or cursed a woman or a man,  
I with my voice declare to thee thy freedom and release therefrom.  
If thou art lying there because of mother's or of father's sin,  
I with my voice declare to thee thy freedom and release therefrom.

*Atharvaveda V, 30, 3. 4.*

Even here, where already magical ideas prevail, nothing suggests that guilt was looked upon as gross matter; man is delivered, and freed from a snare, which is here distinctly stated to be a disease. It is peculiar that, as we have seen before, remission is pronounced also for the sins of the parents. Had these poets, who are already somewhat akin to wizards and sorcerers, a suspicion that sin as a moral disease may descend from parents to children? or did they think of the curse of sin, which settles upon children as an inheritance from their parents? The latter view seems probable, if we bear in mind that we have here a kind of charm before us. But even thus they reveal a serious estimate of sin. We find similar thoughts in Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa III, 7, 12, 3. 4.

If, while I was in mother's womb,  
my parents have committed sin,  
Release me, Agni, from this guilt!  
If I have hurt my father or my mother  
while I was yet a naughty little infant,  
May my dear parents have no hurt to suffer.

In the Brāhmaṇas and in later parts of Vedic literature akin to them the consciousness of the gravity of sin is already vanishing. Considerable space is here occupied by instructions as to how the sacrificer may injure his enemy, or the priest a miserly sacrificer by certain manipulations in performing sacrificial

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V, p. 441 ff.

rites or by the use of certain conjurations. But this is rather an illustration of the corruption of that age in general and of the priests in particular. And as, at that time, the priests became earthly gods and the gods priests, the gods themselves were dragged into the quagmire of moral corruption.<sup>1</sup> This was doubtless one of the causes which co-operated towards the destruction of the belief in the Vedic gods.

## 2. SIN AND EVIL IN THE UPANISHADS.

In the theosophic meditations of the Upanishads the consciousness of sin is surprisingly in the background. The question, how sin may be atoned for and pardon of guilt may be obtained, really no longer engages the thoughts of the sages. In their minds the notion of sin is more and more confused with that of evil. Their whole interest centres in the comprehension of the Absolute Brahman and the ideas connected with it. And as soon as the identity of the individual with the absolute Self was grasped, the question of sin had lost its importance; only the question of evil continued to attract attention. Perhaps this awkward question was avoided more or less intentionally, as the sages rightly felt that here was a weak point in their system. It is certainly remarkable that in Max Müller's translation of the Upanishads the word sin occurs scarcely a dozen times, and even where it does occur, it is sometimes doubtful whether it does not mean evil or misfortune. But in some cases the meaning of sin cannot be doubted. In proof of this we shall quote a few passages.

---

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Dr. L. v. Schræder, *Indiens Literatur und Kultur*, pp. 146—162.



## THE CONCEPTION OF SIN IN THE UPANISHADS.

In Kaushītakī Upanishad II, 7, we read according to Max Müller:

The all-conquering Kaushītakī adores the sun when rising, having put on the sacrificial cord, having brought water, and having thrice sprinkled the water-cup, saying: "Thou art the deliverer, deliver me from sin." In the same manner he adores the sun when in the zenith, saying: "Thou art the highest deliverer, deliver me highly from sin." In the same manner he adores the sun when setting, saying: "Thou art the full deliverer, deliver me fully from sin." Thus he fully removes whatever sin he committed by day and by night. And in the same manner he who knows this, likewise adores the sun, and fully removes whatever sin he committed by day and by night.

We have here a prayer for delivery from sin similar to those in the Vedic hymns. Of course, the sun in its physical appearance is adored as the deliverer from sin. The formulatary character of the petitions is strange enough. They sound like charms and presuppose a magic effect.

In the following passage the author does his best to bring the conception of sin by a philosophically unprejudiced mind into harmony with his philosophy of the sole existence of the Brahman:

That Self is indeed Brahman, consisting of knowledge, mind, life, sight, hearing, earth, water, wind, ether, light and no light, desire and no desire, anger and no anger, right or wrong, and all things. Now as man is like this or that, according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he be:—a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts bad. He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds. And here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, so he will reap. *Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 4, 5.*

The Brahman, according to this passage, is all and includes all psychical and physical existence, good as well as evil. The author is sufficiently unprejudiced to admit the difference of virtue and vice, of good and bad deeds. But all this is included in the Brahman. On the other hand the author also sees the deeds of man arise out of his desire and his will. And he

would like to derive the character of man, his goodness or badness, from his good or bad deeds, clearly because he shrinks from charging the Brahman with the responsibility for evil. The deeds, the actions of the individual soul are something that has no relation whatever to the Brahman. Thus our author is caught on the dilemma that, on the one hand, everything, both good and evil, is included in the Brahman, whereas, on the other hand, the good and evil deeds arise out of the desire and will of the individual Self; and then again the good or bad disposition of this Self is dependent on its good or bad deeds. The sage has in his mental development not yet attained to pure, consistent monism.

The following passage from the Kaushitaki Upanishad is of a much bolder character. Here Indra says:

Know me only; that is what I deem most beneficial for man that he should know me. I slew the three-headed son of Tvashtar; I delivered the Arunmukhas, the devotees, to the wolves; breaking many treaties, I killed the people of Prahlāda in heaven, the people of Puloma in the sky, and the people of Kālakañja on earth.<sup>1</sup> And not one hair of me was harmed there. And he who knows me thus, by no deed of his is his life harmed, not by the murder of his mother, not by the murder of his father, not by theft, not by the killing of a Brahmana. If he is going to commit a sin, the bloom does not depart from his face. *Kaushitaki Up. III, 1.*

This sage has not yet lost the horror of parricide and such like crimes; but he sacrifices his horror of sin to his theosophic wisdom; from this standpoint sin is no longer of any consequence. Indra boasts of unrighteous deeds; but to him these deeds were no harm. The principal point is that he should be recognised, as is said afterwards, as the breath of life, the Self consisting of consciousness or thinking, as life and immortality, that is, as the Absolute Brahman. In the presence of this light of knowledge all distinctions of what is morally good and morally evil disappear.

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Rigveda* V, 34, 4.

The author of the Maitrāyaṇīya Brāhmaṇa Upanishad expounds the ultimate secret concerning evil, according to the notions of that mystic wisdom :

Bewilderment, fear, grief, sleep, sloth, carelessness, decay, sorrow, hunger, thirst, niggardliness, wrath, infidelity, ignorance, envy, cruelty, folly, shamelessness, meanness, pride, changeability,—these are the results of the quality of darkness (*tamas*). Inward thirst, foudness, passion, covetousness, unkindness, love, hatred, deceit, jealousy, vain restlessness, fickleness, unstableness, emulation, greed, patronising of friends, family pride, aversion to disagreeable objects, devotion to agreeable objects, whispering, prodigality,—these are the results of the quality of passion (*rajas*). By these he is filled, by these he is overcome, and therefore his elemental Self assumes manifold forms, yes, manifold forms. III, 5.

Observe here, above all, the confused medley of physiological processes and physical, intellectual, and ethical qualities. The bad moral qualities, however, preponderate, and probably all the things enumerated here are detestable in the view of the author. As such they are products of the two lower constituents, *i. e.*, black apathetic inertness, and red passion, which latter stands in the midst between good and evil. These constituents, according to the view of the author, belong to the sphere of Māyā-Prakṛiti, and accomplish their work in the five elements of which the material world is made up. The material Self is pervaded and overcome by these material causes of evil, and therefore it takes so many forms, *i. e.*, is subject to transmigration. The latter is the evil of all evils, which is here traced back to evil in the moral sense. But this moral evil is in its turn derived from matter, which is assigned to Māyā-Prakṛiti, *i. e.*, declared to be illusion.

#### METEMPSYCHOSIS THE EVIL OF ALL EVILS.

The conclusion of the above quotation leads us to the final analysis of evil. The evil of all evils, that from which the Hindu of every philosophical school, of every religious sect, longs to be delivered, is transmigration (*saṃsāra*, *janmāntara*, *punarjanman*). Philosophic Hinduism simply assumes that the doctrine of metempsychosis is found in the Veda, *i. e.*,

not only in the Upanishads, but also in the hymns. But modern scholars are all but unanimous in their opinion that not the slightest trace of this doctrine is to be found in the hymns. Contrary to this, philosophic Hinduism, through Śankara, refers us to Ṛigveda x, 190, 3, where it is said:

Dhātār, the great Creator, then formed in due order Sun and Moon.  
He formed in order Heaven and Earth, the regions of the air, and light.

Śankara, according to later usage, translates the expression *yathāpūrvam* by "as before". Then the quotation would contain a suggestion of repeated creations, with which idea, at least to the Hindu mind, is immediately connected the other notion of transmigration. But even Deussen observes that this interpretation is untenable, as in the Vedic language that expression means only "in due order", or "one after the other". The idea of transmigration, therefore, is not even hinted at in this passage.

According to Dr. Garbe<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Böhtlingk thinks this idea is to be found in Ṛigveda i, 164, 30. 38:

30 That which has breath and speed and life and motion  
lies firmly stablished in the midst of houses.

Living, by offerings to the Dead, he moveth,  
Immortal One, the brother of the mortals.

38 Back, forward goes he, grasped by strength inherent,  
the Immortal born, the brother of the mortals.

Ceaseless they move in opposite directions:  
men mark the one and fail to mark the other.

It is difficult to say which of these dark mysterious words is supposed to suggest transmigration. Perhaps v. 30 *b* might be translated "the living wanders by the strength of the dead", and this might be interpreted to mean transmigration, because the word "wanders (*charati*)" in later times, indeed, became a technical term for transmigration. But even thus the thing remains at all events very doubtful. The allusion in v. 38 is still more obscure. And is it admissible to draw out of such dark, doubtful expressions a notion which is not to be

---

<sup>1</sup> *Die Sāṅkhya Philosophie*, p. 174, footnote.

found elsewhere in the hymns and is in contradiction with the general view of human life contained in the hymns?

### THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA OF TRANSMIGRATIONS.

It is only at a later time, *viz.*, in the Upanishads, that the idea of transmigration comes distinctly in view. How is its origin to be accounted for? Did it originate on Indo-Āryan soil? Did it steal from without into the religious thoughts of the Indian Āryans? And if such be the case, whence and through what channel did it come? It is a well-known fact that the belief in transmigration is found among other tribes and peoples. Gough<sup>1</sup> shows that numerous tribes and races, at different times and in different parts of the globe, believed and still believe in certain forms of transmigration. Greek philosophers, like Pythagoras and Plato, also shared this belief, which the former, as we have reasons to assume, had received from the East. Cæsar (*De Bello Gallico*) says that the Druids used to impart it as a kind of esoteric doctrine to their pupils. Among lower races the idea appears in this form, that the souls of men are believed to enter into animals or plants, either as a reward for good or as a punishment for bad deeds committed by them in their human existence. Gough supposes that such ideas predominated also among the non-Āryan aborigines of India, and that the Āryans appropriated them from the aboriginal tribes after having come into continuous contact with them. We know, however, very little about the thoughts of the pre-Āryan aborigines of India, and that they believed in transmigration is exactly the thing we do not know. And if the idea of transmigration originated spontaneously among many different peoples, the question arises whether in the religious thoughts of the Indian Āryans themselves the conditions for the origin of this belief were not present.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 24 ff.

Oldenberg assumes this, and, apparently, with good reasons. He points out that there are traces in the ancient literature of India of the otherwise wide-spread belief that dead men's souls are incarnated in animals. "Perhaps the most important testimony is the precept of a law-book (Baudhāyana II, 14, 9. 10), at the sacrifice for the dead to throw a handful of rice to the birds also, as it is thrown for the manes: for it is taught that the fathers go along taking the shape of birds." Oldenberg further refers to the Buddhist story of a mother, who died while her son was on a journey, and who became a female jackal, lurking on the way to prevent her son from entering a fatal wood. He thinks this story "might be connected with the ancient popular belief that dead men's souls can enter the bodies of animals. If this be true, have we not here something from that group of ideas which prepared the ground for the belief in transmigration? and will not this belief, in the face of research advancing ever farther and deeper, lose more and more of the character of a sudden, new creation which seemed to cling to it?"<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that on a ground so prepared the doctrine of transmigration could have grown up as well as elsewhere. But whatever may have been its origin, the theosophic speculation of the Indian Aryans has developed this doctrine in a form very peculiar and very different from such ideas among other peoples.

#### THE TIME OF ITS GROWTH IN INDIA.

It seems to us that Professor von Schröder<sup>2</sup> is right in assuming that the time and the spirit of the Yajurveda and suchlike texts was the religious atmosphere favouring the origin and growth of such gloomy ideas. In those times the hand of the priesthood lay heavily on the Āryan people. Long sacrificial celebrations with a lengthy, dull, tiresome ritual were required and, without doubt, frequently enforced. To deeper

<sup>1</sup> Oldenberg, *ibid.* p. 562 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Indiens Literatur und Kultur*, p. 99.

minds the sacrificial worship became a meaningless formalism, which could no longer satisfy their spiritual wants. It was from this dissatisfaction that the seclusion of hermites, asceticism, and self-mortification were, if not born, yet increased to an extravagant degree, because "man, not satisfied with all sacrifices, looks into himself for the cause of it, and by self-mortification tries to purify or mortify sinful nature. Such a dull depression might well prepare the mind of the people for a dogma like that of transmigration, by which the believer resigns himself to the melancholy belief that he will have to wander through immeasurable ages, through an infinite number of bodies, till at last, after so many failures, the goal may perhaps be reached."

As Buddhism presupposes the doctrine of transmigration, its origin must fall within the pre-Buddhist period, *viz.*, 1000 to 700 B.C. Although not in distinct outlines, yet in some way the development of this belief may be traced, especially in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Oldenberg<sup>1</sup> shows that in these texts the belief in transmigration appears in the form of repeated deaths. Death is represented as an enemy, or as a plurality of hostile powers, which pursue man and try to take a pernicious hold of him, if he cannot satisfy them by sufficient atonements and oblations. Only by sacrifices, says the Brāhmaṇa quite in the spirit of sacerdotalism, can man escape from these pursuers. This very peculiarity, which afterwards is completely abandoned, shows that here we have the earliest beginnings of this doctrine. Of course repeated deaths involve repeated births, which is the fundamental idea of the doctrine. A passage of this Brāhmaṇa says that the gods, who according to Indian views were originally not immortal, at the advice of Prajāpati, obtained immortality by performing certain sacrifices. Of this Death complains: "In the very same way all men will become immortal; then what portion will remain for me?" The gods assure him that in future men shall no

---

<sup>1</sup> *Buddha's Leben etc.*, pp. 45—48.

longer become immortal together with their bodies, that the latter shall as before be the prey of death. Whosoever in future becomes immortal, either by knowledge or by works, shall only become so after his departure from the body. The author then informs his readers that knowledge and works mean only that knowledge and those works which are Agni himself, and then continues:

Those who so know this or who perform rites, are born again after death; and by being so born they attain immortality. Whilst those who do not so know or do not perform rites, are indeed born again after death, but become again and again his food. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* X, 4, 3. 9. 10.<sup>1</sup>

### REPEATED BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

Thus the idea of repeated births and repeated deaths is distinctly stated here, and that in a form which seems to indicate the first development of this doctrine. The idea of repeated deaths involving repeated births occurs again and again in the Upanishads. Thus we read in *Kāth. Up.* I, 2, 5. 6:

Fools dwelling in darkness, wise in their own conceit, and puffed up with vain knowledge, go round and round, staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind. The hereafter never rises before the eyes of the careless child, deluded by the delusion of wealth. "This is the world," he thinks, "there is no other;"—thus he falls again and again under my sway.

The speaker here is Yama, the god of death. He who again and again falls into his hands dies again and again at the end of each earthly life into which he is born. This is the wandering life of the fools, who instead of acquiring true wisdom give themselves to the delusion of wealth and the fame of traditional learning.

There is a similar passage in another part of the same work:

What is here (visible in the world), the same is there (invisible in the Brahman) and what is there, the same is here. He who sees any difference here (between the Brahman and the world), goes from death to death. Even by the mind this (Brahman) is to be obtained, and then there is no difference whatsoever. He goes from death to death, who sees any difference here. *Kāth. Up.* II, 4, 10. 11. Comp. also *Bṛihadār. Up.* IV, 4, 19.

---

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Dr. Muir, *Original Sanscrit Texts*, V, p. 316 ff.



"To go from death to death" means to travel through a long series of births and to die again and again. The idea of transmigration is here imbedded into the mystico-theosophical ideas of the Upanishads. He who thinks the world is different from the Brahman, he who does not know the essential unity of the individual and the absolute Self, is doomed to transmigration. Here the doctrine of transmigration is already in full course of development.

### THE BṚHADĀRANYAKA AND CHHĀNDOGYA ON TRANSMIGRATION.

The Bṛihadāranyaka and the Chhāndogya Upanishads contain each a passage on transmigration which in their main features agree, but differ in a few particulars. Deussen prefers the text of the former on account of its greater clearness, which in the latter appears disturbed by additions. We quote the passage according to Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad, adding occasional points of importance from Chhāndogya Upanishad. Five questions are here put to Śvetaketu, all of which have reference to transmigration: "1. Dost thou know how men, when they depart from here, are separated from each other? 2. Dost thou know how they come back to this world? 3. Dost thou know how that world does never become full with the many who again and again depart thither? 4. Dost thou know at the offering of which libation the waters become endowed with a human voice and rise and speak? 5. Dost thou know the entrance to the path leading to the gods, or to the path leading to the fathers? By what deeds men gain access to the path leading to the gods or to that leading to the fathers?" Śvetaketu is obliged to confess his complete ignorance, and his Brahmanical pride being hurt, he hurries to his father for an answer to these five questions. But he, too, cannot answer them, and father and son together go to the questioner himself, Jaivali Pravāhaṇa of the Kshatriya caste, as his pupils, to find out the answer, that is, to

learn about transmigration. No Brāhmaṇa, it is said, ever before obtained this information. This at all events points to the fact that the doctrine of transmigration then was still in course of development and had not yet become the common property of the Āryan people. In the teacher's answer first the wandering of the soul from above, from heaven, downwards into earthly life is set forth with its five stages, which are symbolically described as five sacrificial fires. The ascent from this earthly into the heavenly world is then described as the path of the gods and the path of the fathers.

### I. The five Sacrificial Fires as the Descent of the Soul.

Bṛihadār. Up. vi, 1 (2), 9—14.

1. The altar (fire), O Gautama, is that world (heaven); the fuel is the sun itself, the smoke his rays, the light the day, the coals the quarters, the sparks the intermediate quarters. On that altar (in that fire) the gods offer faith (or the *śrāddha* libation consisting of water). From that oblation rises Soma, the king (the moon). (9)

2. The altar, O Gautama, is Parjanya (the god of rain); the fuel is the year itself, the smoke the clouds, the light the lightning, the coals the thunderbolt, the sparks the thunderings. On that altar the gods offer Soma, the king (the moon). From that oblation rises rain. (10)

3. The altar, O Gautama, is this world; the fuel is the earth itself, the smoke the fire, the light the night, the coals the moon, the sparks the stars. On that altar the gods offer rain. From that oblation rises food. (11)

4. The altar, O Gautama, is man (*purusha*); the fuel is the opened mouth, the smoke the breath, the light the tongue, the coals the eye, the sparks the ear. On that altar the gods offer food. From that oblation rises seed. (12)

5. The altar, O Gautama, is woman. On that altar the gods offer seed. From that oblation rises man. He lives so long as he lives, and then when he dies (13), they take him to the fire (the funeral-pile), and then the altar-fire is indeed fire, the fuel fuel, the smoke smoke, the light light, the coals coals, the sparks sparks. In that very altar-fire the gods offer man, and from that oblation man rises, brilliant in colour. (14)

We have here a cosmic sacrifice again with five symbolical altar-fires, representing the process by which the individual soul descends from the world beyond into this earthly world, to reascend at last in a form of light from the funeral-pile. When the soul has reached the lowest point of its downward development, three paths are open to it in which it can continue

its wanderings: the path of the gods, in which it comes into the world of the gods, to Brahman; the path of the fathers, leading to temporary bliss in the fields of the fathers, in the moon; and a third path, not described in detail, which leads still farther downwards. These paths are as follows:

## II. The Path of the Gods, according to Bṛihadār.

Up. vi, 1, 18 (2, 15).

Those who thus know this (even Gṛihasthas) and those who in the forest worship faith and the True (Brahman, Hiranyagarbha) (or, worship faith and truth), go to the flame (of the funeral-pile); from the flame to day, from day to the half month of the crescent; from the half month of the crescent into the six months during which the sun goes northward; from these months into the world of the gods; from the world of the gods to the sun; from the sun to the place of lightning. When they have arrived at the place of lightning a spirit-like man comes and leads them to the worlds of the (conditioned) Brahman. In these worlds of the Brahman they inhabit the farthest distant places. There is no returning for them.

This is the description of the path of the gods (*devayāna*). It is for those who in the solitude of the forests "worship faith and truth", that is, for the pious with a mystic disposition, who have resolved to turn away from the visible world to the True, to the knowledge of the absolute Brahman. This path, very strangely, leads through various spheres of the physical world, spheres of which we cannot well form an idea. We may say, it leads through the visible sky to the heaven of the gods, and through this to the spheres of the Brahman, where truth dwells, an ocean of intellectual light, impersonal, ever bright, not disturbed by a breeze, in which these sages are likely to immerse, and therefore do not return to the spheres of earthly existence, to the scene of transmigration.

## III. The Path of the Fathers. Bṛihadār. Up. vi, 1, 19 (2, 16):

But they who conquer the worlds (future states) by means of sacrifice, charity, and austerity, go to smoke, from smoke to night, from night to the half month of the decreasing moon, from the half month of the decreasing moon to the six months when the sun goes southward, from these months to the world of the fathers, from the world of the fathers to the moon. Having reached the moon, they become food, and then the gods feed on them there, as

king Soma is fed upon, with the words, "Increase and decrease". But when this (the result of their good works on earth) ceases for them, they return to ether, from ether to air, from air to rain, from rain to earth. And when they have reached the earth, they become food. They are offered again in the altar-fire of man, and then they are born in the altar-fire of woman. Thus they rise upwards to the worlds and go the same round as before. But those who know neither of these two paths become insects, birds and all sorts of biting vermin.

The path of the fathers then, which is to be reached by sacrifices, charity, and austerities, according to the ancestral fashion, does not lead to the highest goal in the Brahman-world from which there is no return. It leads to the moon, which is probably the highest region in the world of the fathers. Thence the path of transmigration leads again downward to the earth. The human souls there first serve as food for the gods, as Soma, that royal drink, is taken with the Vedic words, "Increase and decrease!" The Soma plant increases, *i.e.*, swells by being soaked in water before the Soma juice is pressed out; while the juice is being pressed out, the plant decreases. One might be inclined to find in this consumption of the souls by the gods the idea of dissolution into the several elements presided over by the gods as their representatives. At any rate the souls, probably in the state of unconsciousness, return into the five elements, in order to re-enter human existence in the path of rain, food, generation, and birth. The words, "when this ceases for them", relate in the first place to their consumption by the gods. The ingenuity of Vedānta commentators, however, gives them the further meaning, "When the fruit of their earthly works is consumed",—a process which they say goes on at the same time that they are consumed by the gods. They also say that to the swelling and diminishing of the Soma on earth corresponds the increase and decrease of the moon, the heavenly Soma, which has a significant analogy in the ascent of the souls to the moon and their descent into a new earthly existence. At the close, those who reach neither of these paths, who neither aspire to the knowledge of the Brahman nor to that of Vedic tradition, must expect to enter into insects, birds,

and poisonous vermin. Instead of this the Chhândogya Upanishad adds that those who on earth tried to lead a virtuous life are born in one of the three higher castes; but those who led a bad life are born as dogs, pigs, or even as Chāṇḍālas, *i. e.*, as Pariahs. The Chhândogya Upanishad knows yet a third path, besides the two mentioned above.

#### IV. The third place, according to Chhândogya Up. v, 10, 8. 9.

On neither of these ways are to be found those small creatures (flies, worms, etc.) which return continually, and of which it is said, "Live and die". This is the third place. Therefore that world never becomes full.

The creatures mentioned here are clearly the same as those mentioned in Bṛihadār. Up. iv, 1, 19: insects, vermin, and the like. It is not quite clear, whether the author means to say that these creatures are excluded from the perpetual round of transmigrations, or if those who have neither works nor knowledge and thus can enter neither upon the path of the gods nor upon the path of the fathers, are sent to that third place, where those creatures live, and thus become insects and worms. At any rate, it was in this way that the words were understood in later times. With these declarations the five questions addressed to Śvetaketu are answered, which is suggested by the words: "Thus that world never becomes full." It does not become full, because most souls do not remain there, but return into earthly existence and are wandering from birth to birth.

Max Müller observes that the text still furnishes various problems for the Vedāntist commentators, for its statements do not fit in with their system. For instance, how can a man who consumed the fruit of his works in the moon, and who, in doing so, was consumed by the gods, how can such a man be born again into earthly life, while a new birth is always caused by the fact that the fruit of former works had not been quite consumed? In answer to this question a distinction is made between ritual and other works, and it is said that the fruit of the former is consumed in the moon, whereas the

fruit of the latter must be consumed in a new birth. To us it must indeed be very doubtful whether the author of this passage with the words, "There the gods consume them", in any way thought of the fruit of works. It is yet more doubtful whether he made a distinction between ritual and moral works.

The Vedāntists also found difficulties in the idea that the souls of men come down in rain, and then come to generation and birth in the medium of food. It is certainly a fact that comparatively little rain serves to produce food, but that a great part of it falls into the sea, the rivers, *etc.*; and not all the souls that fall into the sea can expect to enter into fish and other sea-animals. Such souls in the potential state, then, have to make a long intermediate journey through vapours and clouds to rain and then to the earth. In doing so they incur fresh accidentalities, in consequence of which they may be temporarily imprisoned in the bodies of various animals. It is only after endless wanderings that they at last in the form of food re-enter a human body. But even then they are not certain of obtaining birth, much less of being born in a higher caste, which only gives them a chance, but no more than a chance, of attaining to the everlasting light of the Brahman in the path of the gods. We see that in accordance with these ideas the wandering of souls must be extended *ad infinitum*, and the horror with regard to them must increase correspondingly. The sages of the Upanishads certainly did not think of those difficulties; they must have thought the wanderings of the soul through its repeated births to be a much simpler thing. What could seem more natural and more reasonable than to depopulate the crowded heavens by sending back the souls who had sinned on earth and thus were not fit for the world of the gods, and the souls who had not acquired the knowledge of the Brahman, which is the only way to liberation?

Perhaps the author of the original text knew nothing yet of the torments of hell which are here inserted by the

Vedāntists. Then it was only natural for him to imagine that the souls not fit for heaven must return to earth. And for this purpose no other way seemed more suitable than rain, which comes from above, from the regions of the moon, where the souls not prepared for the Brahman-world are, and which according to the common view seems to produce food in plants. How simple was it for souls to proceed by this path and enter into the human organism and thus be born again. Thus the wandering could begin afresh till the highest Brahman was attained.

But, as these wanderings were considered as the evil of all evils, the Chhāndogya Upanishad adds the following final exhortation :

Hence let a man take care of himself! As it is said in the following verse : A man who steals gold, who drinks spirits, who dishonours his teacher's bed, who kills a Brāhmaṇa, these four fall, and as a fifth (companion) he who associates with them. But he who thus knows the five fires, is not defiled by sin, even though he associates with them. He who knows this is pure and clean and obtains the world of the blessed, yea, he obtains the world of the blessed. *Chhānd. Up V, 10, 8—10.*

### SIMILES CONCERNING METEMPSYCHOSIS.

The idea of metempsychosis occurs under various similes, especially in the later Upanishads. Very striking is the simile of a drive in a chariot which is allegorically applied in the following passage, and the additional one of the potter's wheel which even now is frequently found in the mouth of the people :

Now he (according to the context Prajāpati, according to the commentator Vaiśvānara) having divided himself fivefold, is hidden in a secret place (*buddhi* = reason, according to Max Müller) assuming the form of mind, having the breaths of life as his body, resplendent, having true conceptions and free like ether. However feeling himself that he has not obtained his object, he thinks within his heart, "Let me enjoy carnal pleasures". Therefore, having first broken open these five apertures (of the senses), he enjoys carnal pleasures by means of the five reins. This means that these five perceptive organs are his reins, the active organs his horses, the body his chariot, the mind the charioteer, the whip being the temperament. Driven by that whip, this body goes round like the wheel driven by the potter. This body is made intelligent, and he is the driver thereof. This is indeed the Self, who seeming to be filled with desires,

and seeming to be overcome by bright or dark fruits of works, wanders about in every body . . . . Having concealed himself in the cloak of the three qualities he appears as the enjoyer of the works, yea as the enjoyer of his good works. *Maitrāy. Up. II, 6.*

It will be observed that the simile here is not quite homogeneous and consistent. On the one hand the body is the chariot, the organs of action are the horses, the organs of perception the reins, and the mad drive after carnal pleasures begins. But it passes into the wandering of the soul through many births. The body turns in a circle like a potter's wheel. With this the simile of the chariot is half abandoned and the first allusion is made to the great wandering. Afterwards the Self wanders about in "every body". That is the full idea of transmigration. Therefore also the whole is referred to this long journey, which often moves in a circle, as is afterwards said without a simile:

There is indeed yet another different Self, called the Self of the elements (*bhūtatman*), which, overcome by bright and dark fruits of works, enters into good and evil births. Downwards or upwards moves its course, and overwhelmed by the opposites (heat and cold, joy and sorrow, *etc.*) it roams about. *Maitrāy. Up. III, 2.*

### THE LAW OF RECOMPENSE.

Occasionally in these passages the suggestion occurs that transmigration takes its course according to the law of works: good works must be rewarded, bad works must be punished; or more accurately, good works have beneficial effects, bad works have evil results. But the effects of good works have to be recompensed and so tend to keep the subject in the whirl of transmigration, and their value as a reward is therefore rather doubtful. Only true wisdom, the knowledge of the Brahman, brings liberation from the melancholy round of repeated births. The following passage describes this immutable law of recompense in significant similes:

Like the waves in large rivers, that which has been done before cannot be turned back, and, like the tide of the sea, the approach of death is hard to stem. Bound by the fetters of the fruits of good and bad works, like a cripple; without freedom, like a man in prison; beset by many fears, like one standing before



Yama (the king of the dead), intoxicated by the wine of illusion; rushing about like one possessed by evil spirits; bitten by the world like one bitten by a poisonous snake; darkened by passion like the night; illusory like a conjuror's trick; unreal like a dream; pithless like the inside of the plantain tree; changing its dress any moment like an actor; fair in appearance like a painted wall—thus they call him. And therefore it is said: Sound, touch, and other things are like nothings; if the elemental Self is attached to them, it will not remember the highest place. *Maitr̥y. Up. IV, 2.*

It is doubtful who is the subject that is adorned with such grim attributes. According to the final sentence, it most probably means the Self connected with the elements, *i.e.*, the individual soul living in the body, to which the attributes are most suitable. This individual Self is bound by the fetters of good and bad works, and consequently it must put off its body and put on a new one, as an actor changes his apparel—a much used simile. The working of the law of recompense is as immutable as the rush of great rivers in their courses and as the tide of the sea, which comes at its fixed time.

#### THE BRAHMAN CAUSING METEMPSYCHOSIS.

But this view, it seems, is not consistently maintained in the Upanishads. Above all, it does not agree with the doctrine of the identity of the absolute with the individual Self, the beginnings of which reach back into the Upanishads. If the individual Self is but a manifestation of the absolute Self, it cannot be submitted to the iron law of recompense. This conception then is not adequate, wherefore later Vedānta philosophers find themselves under the necessity of assigning this whole doctrine to the exoteric standpoint which is concerned with illusory existence only. We, therefore, find in the Upanishads, side by side with law of works, the idea that the assumption of new bodies is by the act of the Brahman itself:

As a caterpillar, after having reached the end of a blade of grass, while crawling upon another, draws itself together, thus does this Self: after having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance, it draws itself together while

passing into another (body).—As a female artist takes the materials of her artistic, texture and gives it a newer and fairer shape, so also this Self, having thrown off this body and dispelled ignorance, creates for itself a newer and fairer shape, whether it be like the fathers, or like the gandharvas (demi-gods), or like the gods, or like Prajāpati, or like the Brahman, or like that of other beings.

*Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 4, 3. 4.*

Here the active principle in the assumption of new bodies in new births, is not the law of recompense, but the absolute Self itself. This is quite consistent from a point of view to which the absolute Self is the only existent thing, and all the rest, including the wanderings of the individual Self, are only a deceitful illusion. But then there is certainly no longer room for the law of recompense. But we have already seen more than once that the conceptions and statements of the Upanishads are not always logically consistent, as the parts of a carefully developed philosophic system. In the Upanishads the idea of transmigration is only just in course of development, and it is only in the later texts of this class that it takes a definite form. At the same time this conception of evil has displaced the notion of moral evil as sin and stepped into its place.

### 3. THE DOGMA OF TRANSMIGRATION IN THE PHILOSOPHIC SCHOOLS.

#### THE CONCEPTION OF EVIL IN THE SĀNKHYA SCHOOL.

Already in the later Upanishads we see moral evil arise from the two lower constituents (*gunā*), called Rajas and Tamas. These two constituents, however, belong to Prakṛiti, the creative principle of the Sāṅkhya school.<sup>1</sup> Prakṛiti consists of these three constituents in a state of equilibrium, so that no one of them predominates over the others. Morally considered, therefore, Prakṛiti is an indifferent principle. But in the origin of individual beings out of this creative primordial

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, p. 214 ff.

matter the constituents mix in different proportions. And, according to the predominance of one or the other constituent, the degree of moral goodness or badness is determined in different beings. Man, for instance, becomes, as Monier Williams<sup>1</sup> observes, "divine and noble, absolutely human and selfish, or brutish and ignorant, according to the prevalence in him of goodness (*sattva*), or passion (*rajas*), or darkness (*tamas*)."<sup>1</sup> The constituents, or rather the proportions of their mixture, are therefore the cause of moral good or moral evil. We find this conception of evil in the Mahābhārata and in the Bhagavadgītā, which in their philosophic views belong to the Sāṅkhya school. In the Bhagavadgītā prince Arjuna puts the following question to his charioteer Kṛishṇa, the manifestation of the Supreme Being:

By whom then, O son of Vṛishṇi, is man impelled to commit sin, even without his own will, compelled, as by a force?

And then he receives the following information concerning the power and origin of evil:

It is desire, it is anger, born from passion: know this as our enemy, ravenous and pernicious. . . . Wisdom, O son of Kunti, is enveloped by this eternal foe of the man of wisdom, who adopts the shape of desire, and is an insatiable fire. The senses, the mind, the intellect are said to be the seat of this evil: through these it deludes the soul, by enveloping the truth. Therefore, O prince of the Bharatas, first subdue the senses, and then cast off this evil which destroys wisdom and knowledge. *Bhagavadgītā, III, 36-41.*

Evil thus governs man with irresistible power in the form of desires and anger. But these manifestations of human passion are, quite in accordance with the Sāṅkhya doctrine, derived from "passion" which forms the second constituent of Prakṛiti (*rajogunāsamudbhava*). It also agrees with the views of that school that the pernicious rule of evil has its origin in the concealment of wisdom, which according to Sāṅkhya doctrine could alone deliver man from that corruption. But wisdom, the knowledge of Self, is veiled by the senses, mind, and reason,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Wisdom*, p. 95.

*i.e.*, the Upādhis, which are products of Prakṛiti. She is really responsible for the great evil of sin, which like fire consumes everything. Even in the guise of Sāṅkhya phraseology the passage is a pathetic description of sin, in which the unprejudiced moral consciousness of man breaks through the theory of the philosopher.

### THE MAHĀBHĀRATA ON THE GROWTH OF MORAL EVIL.

Elsewhere in the Mahābhārata the voice of practical morality makes itself heard without regard to a philosophic system. The following passage, in which Yudhisṭhira is instructed concerning the development of sin among men, is particularly interesting:

Be quite attentive, O hero strong as the tiger, and hear from me everything without exception, how once government originated, in the beginning, in the first, golden age (13). Then there was neither government nor governor, no power of punishment nor any one who punished: then all the people protected one another by their virtue (14). So they did protect one another, O Bhārata, by their virtue: but soon they grew sick of the thing, and infatuation seized them within (15). Now when men, O mighty ruler, succumbed to the dark power of infatuation, then, by the obscuration of their understanding, their virtue completely perished (16). When their understanding was lost, when men succumbed to the power of infatuation, then, O noblest of the Bhāratas, they all fell a prey to the power of avarice (17). Then men began to lay their hands on what belonged to others; and further, my prince, it so happened that evil lust approached them (18). Having fallen a prey to evil lust, they were seized by what is called passion: burning with passion they quite forgot, O Yudhisṭhira, what is right and what is wrong (19). Nothing was abhorred, not even incest, whether it might be mentioned or not be mentioned, the eatable or the uneatable, whether it was good or bad, O Yudhisṭhira (20). Now, when the world had fallen into disorder, then sacred wisdom was lost: and with the loss of sacred wisdom, O king, virtue perished altogether (21).

*Mahābhārata XII, 59, 13—21.*

There are three remarkable points in this passage. In the first place, the author speaks of a golden age, which was without sin and therefore neither ruler nor judge was required. For virtue, the law within man, was sufficient to protect men from wrong and outrage. Readers acquainted with the Bible will at once remember Genesis I—III and Romans II, 14. The

second remarkable point is that the author knows an inner law, *viz.*, virtue, which affords better protection than written laws administered by the state. Thirdly, we may observe how the author tries to account for the origin and development of sin. People had got weary of their original, paradisiacal existence. With weariness came infatuation; reason became dim; virtue, the inward dominion of law, perished; the desire for property and wealth became paramount; people laid hands on what belonged to others; like an evil demon, evil lust and passion took possession of men; all distinctions of right and wrong, good and evil, shame and shamelessness were lost sight of. With the prevalence of sin, sacred wisdom—in biblical language, the knowledge of God—was lost. And the consequence of this religious loss was further moral depravation, the ruin of all virtue, complete moral corruption. Compare with this Romans 1, 18—32, where the same development is described, only much more logically, and much more in accordance with the actual state of human life. This ancient poet differs from some more modern writers in holding that without virtue, without righteousness and a holy life there can be no knowledge of God, and without knowledge of God there is no true morality.

### THE MAHĀBHĀRATA THROWING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIN ON GOD.

But the Mahābhārata also contains some other passages, in which the whole responsibility for sin is taken from man, and in reality thrown upon God himself. By this the vital nerve of morality is cut and the gates are thrown open for all evil:

Either God or man may be the doer of our deeds, according to what tradition says: compulsion may rule in the world, O Bhārata, or else the fruit of our works (12). If then it is according to the command of the Supreme Ruler, O Bhārata, that man does good or evil, then the fruit of works which he has done accrues to the Supreme Ruler (13). That is just like a man in the forest felling a tree to the ground with his axe: the guilt belongs to him who felled the tree, and not to the axe, that served him as his tool (14). Or it may be that the fruit of works follows the effect of an equal cause: then sin is

only the effect of the cause and can never be found in man (15). It is not right, O prince, that the penalty of what is the doing of one agent should be paid by another one. "Let it fall upon him!"—with these words put it down to the Creator, from whom it issues (16). Or let it be granted that man is the doer of deeds, either good or evil—there is no higher work than this, and this must be believed by thee to be a good work (17). No single man, O king, can ever evade that which fate ordained for him: the effect of the cause alone is sin, and never will the sin be found in man (18). Or it may be that thou, O king, believest that necessity alone is that which is established; in that case, too, an evil deed never was, nor will ever be, committed (19). Thus the works of men, O Bhārata, are ever turning round, and out of them grow fruits both good and evil; this is, O king, what I think of this matter (21). Every evil deed is in its nature only an effect of some other deed done before. So then give it up, O mighty ruler, and do not yield thy heart to sorrow (22).

*Mahābhārata XII, 32, 12—22.*

Yudhishtira was troubled by the question whether he did right in waging war and thereby endangering the life of so many people. Then Vyāsa, a celebrated Indian sage, instructs him concerning the nature of human actions. According to tradition (*smṛitam*), he says, there may be four agents of human actions. The agent may be (1) God (*Īśvara*); (2) man or the individual Self (*Puruṣa*); (3) necessity (*haṭha*) or fate; (4) the law of recompense (*karmajam phalam*). Vyāsa, however, is quite sure that in any case, whether God, or fate, or the law of recompense is the agent of human actions, man is by no means responsible and may do good or evil as he likes. What is said about the law of recompense, is not quite clear. According to that theory it is man's own works done in an earlier birth, which in his present birth necessarily result in good or evil works, though he has himself no consciousness of his works in a former birth. To make this law of recompense the cause of human actions in the present birth, is to our way of thinking only to date his responsibility back to an earlier existence. But Vyāsa knows how to evade human responsibility, even if *man* is supposed to be the active source of his own actions (v. 17). Over him also rules an inexorable fate, from which he cannot escape. From whatever point of view the matter may be considered, man cannot choose between good and evil; he is in reality only the

tool, used by another power. Therefore away with all scruples! This doctrine has been heard, learned, marked and inwardly digested by the Indian people to a most fatal extent, which however, as we have seen, does not prevent a true sense of guilt from flashing forth occasionally. With this doctrine every sin is excused; with it the common people comfort themselves in the face of all the misery which is the consequence of sin; and with it the edge of every divine visitation upon sin is turned. It is evident that this doctrine is fatal to all aspiration after virtue and lofty ideals. It is also largely responsible for the present condition of social life in India.

#### THE VEDĀNTA CONCEPTION OF MORAL EVIL.

The monistic Vedānta of Śāṅkara and his school fully shares this doctrine and tries to interpret it in its own way. It cannot evade the conclusion that sin, and evil, have their last cause in God, *i. e.*, the Brahman. Deussen, in his *System des Vedānta*, among various cosmological problems also mentions this moral problem: Can the Creator be the cause of physical and moral evil?

#### THE EXOTERIC POINT OF VIEW.

This question is first answered from the exoteric point of view: God, it is said, cannot be the cause of evil, nor even the cause of the world, for the simple reason that He would then be unjust and cruel. Yet we have seen above, that according to Śāṅkara and Deussen, God is the material and effective cause of the world.<sup>1</sup> Deussen adds that in ancient India the notion of sin and guilt was not so distinctly defined, but that it took the form of the non-good, which, he says, has its place between the notion of physical and that of moral evil. We must, however, protest that in Vedic antiquity the

---

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 235 *f.*

notion of sin and guilt was very distinct and well defined, and its relation to the notion of physical evil was very distinctly comprehended, but that philosophic Hinduism dissolved the notion of sin into that of physical evil. But, of course, if the Supreme Being is identical with the individual soul, it cannot itself have created the evils which the individual soul suffers from. From this fact the Vedānta, according to Deussen, must draw the conclusion, "that the world cannot have been created by a Spiritual Being, who knows what is good for himself". The world therefore is declared to be simply a product of ignorance, mere delusion and deceit.

But neither Śāṅkara nor Deussen is satisfied with this solution of the problem. The latter, therefore, has a special chapter on the solution of all the cosmic problems and also of the question with which we are concerned here. According to him, the Indians (*i. e.*, Śāṅkara) have found two ways out of the dilemma: "either by ascribing both the nature (*essentia*) and the creation (*existentia*) of the world not to God, but to a principle inherent in the world itself, or, from an idealistic point of view, by denying the existence of the world altogether." Thus, according to Śāṅkara and Deussen, a man may be a dualist and a monist, a realist and an idealist at the same time. In reality the question of the origin of evil in the physical sense of the term, does not concern us here. Śāṅkara solves the problem by the assumption of transmigration, which of course is no solution at all. Transmigration is itself the greatest of all evils, and the question is, where does it come from? Transmigration as an evil, if caused by the Brahman, casts the very dark shadow of cruelty upon this Supreme Being. How does the Vedānta solve this problem? Here again an exoteric subterfuge stands side by side with the sublimest esoteric wisdom. Concerning the cruelty of the Brahman, Śāṅkara remarks in an apologising strain:

"As there are, among the various stones of the earth, many different kinds, precious stones of the highest value, as diamonds, beryls, *etc.*; such of minor value, as crystals, *etc.*; and common



stones, which may be valued like dogs and crows; as we observe, among the plants growing on one soil, different kinds of leaves, blossoms and fruits, smells, tastes, *etc.*; as one food produces blood and similar fluids, hairs of the head and the body, and such like different products; so out of one Brahman comes the difference of the individual and the absolute Self, as also a multiformity of effects. Such is the origin of the one out of the other, *i.e.*, the origin of evil as caused by the Absolute."

Śankara here first indulges again in *Pariṇāmavāda*, that is, in the assumption that the world had its origin in the Brahman as its material cause. Then, of course, also sin and physical evil must have their origin in the Brahman, and the Brahman must be responsible for moral evil. After this descent to the exoteric point of view, Śankara, according to Deussen, ought to take a soaring flight to monistic idealism, so that the whole thing might end in harmony. But Śankara has presented the idealistic standpoint before in his elucidation of the preceding aphorism, and then descended to the exoteric level. Deussen would be prepared to exonerate him of this backsliding by assuming an interpolation. But in such things these Vedānta schoolmen were not at all pedantic; they did not mind a downward jump more or less.

### THE ESOTERIC POINT OF VIEW.

But now for the solution of the problem from the esoteric standpoint: "But if by means of the doctrine of identity, according to the word, 'That art thou', and similar sayings, the consciousness of identity is awakened, then the state of transmigration for the individual soul, and the attribute of Creator for the Brahman have disappeared; for all the dealings and doings of diversity, which arise from false knowledge, are done away with by the true knowledge. Where should there be still creation, and where the guilt of sin, such as not having done what is good? For transmigration, which has the omission of

what is good as its concomitant, is a false delusion, produced by the non-distinction of false vestures, and consists of the totality of effects and causes, formed of names and forms, and is produced by ignorance. And we have never asserted that it has a real existence, no more than the illusion of separations and departures of birth and death." Śāṅkara here makes short work of physical evil and its concomitant of moral evil: it belongs to the external world, the product of ignorance, which has no claim to true, real existence. As this owes its existence not to the Brahman but to Avidyā, so also physical and moral evil are delusive products of ignorance. If once the consciousness of the identity of the absolute and the individual Self has dawned upon a man, then also the problem of the origin of evil is solved, or rather abolished. The existence of physical and moral evil is simply denied, which is quite consistent with the doctrine of identity and there is no need, from the exoteric point of view, to heed what is a mere delusion.

This denial of transmigration as an imaginary evil may be welcomed with the highest satisfaction. But there are other evils, the existence of which cannot so easily be denied. Above all, this bold, idealistic attempt to explain away all evil, is wrecked on the hard fact of sin. The uncorrupted conscience of man does not allow this fact to be explained away. And conscience will also for ever energetically resist the attempt of putting sin down to the Godhead. We may, therefore, with a slight modification, return to Deussen a statement of his directed against theism: The untenableness of idealistic monism, to which the world is unreal or identical with God, appears nowhere more distinctly than in the sphere of ethics. For, in whatever way the thing may be turned and twisted, if the identity of the Godhead and the world is really and seriously assumed, it must always finally be the Godhead on which the responsibility of physical and moral evil will fall, the existence of which cannot be denied. Of course, the consciousness of the idealistic monist, being ethically so insufficiently developed, does not take offence at this conse-

quence. But here the vulnerable point of the whole system appears so much the more distinctly<sup>1</sup>.

### EVIL ACCORDING TO THE SĀṆKHYA.

The doctrine of transmigration is already in the Upanishads the place where the notions of sin and physical evil are linked together and in the course of an uninterrupted evolution has not only obscured, but completely absorbed the sense of guilt and sin. In the different philosophic schools it is already accepted as an uncontested dogma. So first of all in the Sāṅkhya teaching, which has been incorporated in the Mahābhārata and in the Bhagavadgītā. A favourite simile for the description of transmigration is the putting on and off of clothes:

As man putting off old clothes puts on new clothes, so the embodied soul puts off old bodies in order to pass on to new ones. *Bhagavadgītā II, 22.*

Nothing is said here of the law of recompense, which however does not prove that the author had not the idea. It is perhaps only on account of the simile of clothes that the embodied Self is made the active cause of the whole process of transmigration. In the following passage transmigration appears as the sum of all evils:

As the souls here in this body pass through childhood, youth, and old age, so also, when they assume other bodies: the wise man is thereby not deceived. The contacts of matter, O son of Kunti, which produce cold and heat, pleasure and pain, are coming and going, and do not last for ever; do thou bear them, O son of Bhārata. *Bhagavadgītā II, 13. 14.*

It is an idea very familiar to the Indian mind that childhood, youth, and old age are each of them subject to peculiar temptations, dangers, and sufferings. Thus here these three periods of life appear as the sum of all evil. They are so in the present and in all future births. In v. 14 these births are

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, p. 300.

said to be contacts with matter (*mātrāsparsāh*), because according to the Sāṅkhya doctrine every birth in the body is an embodiment of the absolute Self, the body being made up of the elements, the products of Prakṛiti, wherefore it involves a contact of spirit and matter. From this contact arise the opposites of cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and all the evils that flesh is heir to. Of these births it is said in the Bhagavadgītā iv, 5 :

Numerous are the births, O Arjuna, which I and thou have passed through; I know them all, but thou, O vanquisher of thy enemies, doest not know them.

Also Kṛishṇa, whose words are here quoted, has gone through many births, of course quite differently from Arjuna, whom he addresses. The former is the manifestation of the Supreme Being, and can as such undergo any incarnation at his own will. But Arjuna is subject to the law of transmigration. He, therefore, has no consciousness of his former births. This is the weakest point of the doctrine of transmigration, which seeks its strongest support in the sense of justice in men, according to which every action must receive the reward or punishment due to it. This idea finds its best expression in a distich, which is current even to-day :

The fruit of the action done, whether good or bad, must be recompensed. Even in ten millions of aeons actions, unless recompensed, will never come to rest.

Or as the following often quoted passage of the Mahābhārata says :

Whatever a man does, be it good or evil, in childhood, boyhood, or in old age, from birth to birth it is recompensed in quite the same situation respectively. As a calf immediately finds out its mother among many thousands, so does the fruit of actions done in bygone ages follow the agent. *Mahābh. XIII, 322, 15. 16.*

### THE DOCTRINE OF RECOMPENSE EXAMINED.

That every action has either its reward or its punishment is indeed a great truth, which, apart from the doctrine of transmigration, will always hold good. But its application in the doctrine of transmigration is so harsh and severe that its

justice turns out the highest injustice. Transmigration with its sufferings and pains is supposed to be a recompense of actions done by man in his former births. And yet in the above passage the Bhagavadgītā frankly says that man has no remembrance of those former births. He is, therefore, rewarded or punished for actions of which he has no consciousness. If a man were treated in this way, for instance, in a law-court, he would call it the most cruel injustice. But here it is proclaimed as a cosmic law, for which the Godhead must somehow be responsible, and which is supposed with the severest rigidity to recompense human actions, though not a vestige of memory survives. The natural and moral laws which govern man's life always keep within certain reasonable bounds. A law so harsh and rigid as the one by which transmigration is supposed to be regulated, and which in its inexorable rigidity serves no moral purpose, cannot be a cosmic law laid down by the Supreme Being. The law in question is in reality a conception invented and carried to the extreme by man; an idea for which there is no proof either in history or in experience, and which cannot bear critical examination. But the whole Sāṅkhya school adheres to this doctrine, without adding anything to it in the shape of fresh argument or further development:

By the absence of passion there is dissolution of Prakṛiti. Transmigration is from disorderly passions. *Sāṅkhya Pravachana* 45.<sup>1</sup>

### THE YOGA SŪTRAS ON TRANSMIGRATION.

The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali do not say much of the doctrine of transmigration, but they presuppose it everywhere, intended as they are, to show the way to liberation. Allusions to it are, however, not wanting:

The receptacle of works has its root in these pain-bearing obstructions, and their experience in this visible life, or in the unseen life. The root being there,

---

<sup>1</sup> Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 141.

the fruition comes (in the form of) species, life, and experience of pleasure and pain. They bear fruit as pleasure and pain, caused by virtue and vice. To the discriminating, all is, as it were, painful on account of everything bringing pain, either in the consequence, or in apprehension, or in attitude caused by impressions, also on account of the counter-action of qualities. *Yoga Sūtra II, 12—15.*<sup>1</sup>

The text is obscure and difficult. Swāmi Vivekānanda gives a lengthy elucidation of it, without rendering it much more intelligible. Bose<sup>2</sup> also leaves some points unexplained. This much, however, is clear that the "receptacle of works" is the result of former births, and must lead to ever new births in future. The substance of these births is all kinds of suffering: actual sufferings, sufferings only apprehended, and sufferings to come in future. So for all those who cannot, by the acquisition of true knowledge, comprehend the true essence of things, this whole life, and all successive lives, are but an endless chain of suffering and pain, from which only true knowledge and concentration on the Supreme Being can bring about liberation.

#### THE VAIŚEŚHIKA CONCEPTION OF EVIL.

The other schools all accept the dogma of transmigration, but we shall only refer to the Vaiśeshika. The peculiarity of this school is the doctrine that the cycle of births, the distribution of happiness and suffering, is ruled by the dark power of destiny: "From pleasure arises desire...and also through destiny (*adṛiṣṭa*)." Vaiśeshika Sūtra v, 2, 10. 12.<sup>3</sup>

This invisible, unknowable destiny brings about creation in the beginning of things; it is also the cause of successive births, and the law of recompense which regulates them. It cannot be said that by this the mind gets more light and the heart more consolation. Where blind fate comes in, human com-

<sup>1</sup> Swāmi Vivekānanda, *Yoga Philosophy*, pp. 155—159.

<sup>2</sup> Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 173 f.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 252.

prehension and with it the philosophic view of things is at an end. Blind fate is also the death of pious confidence in God, and of the religious contemplation of things. No other choice is left but stolid, despondent resignation.

### THE VEDĀNTA VIEW OF METEMPSYCHOSIS.

The Vedānta system has developed this doctrine in all its parts, and has given it its final form, in which it is now the common property of philosophic Hinduism. In virtue of his distinction between a lower exoteric and a higher esoteric standpoint, the typical Vedāntist Śāṅkara is enabled to receive into his system all the statements and allusions of the Upanishads that have reference to transmigration.

### THE EXOTERIC POINT OF VIEW.

From the exoteric point of view he is able, without doing violence to the texts and without any omissions, to appropriate not only the law of recompense, but also the notion of the Vedic hymns that the gods reward virtue and punish vice. This falls within the sphere of practical existence which, of course, has its significance for the non-initiated only. For the initiated who have attained to the knowledge of absolute identity, there is, of course, no distinction between good and evil, no recompense in heaven or hell, and no transmigration. It may be assumed that Śāṅkara and his school are included among the initiated. And yet they treat the exoteric doctrine of transmigration with a seriousness and prolixity, which makes us, and probably them also, altogether forget that what we are really concerned with is only a conflict with the unreal products of Avidyā, which it would be best to ignore or at least to deny. What induced these Vedānta schoolmen to try and account for a conception so erroneous as that of transmigration? Simply the fact that the doctrine is found in the Upanishads and that they themselves claim to be orthodox.

From this exoteric standpoint Śankara describes the wanderings of the soul from the moment of death up to its return into a fresh earthly existence. He does not do so in a connected discourse but in scattered observations, which Deussen has put together in his book on the system of the Vedānta. Those wanderings proceed in different stages. The first is the departure of the soul from the body. It is to be inferred from the passage in Chhāndogya Upanishad VI, 8, 6:

Now, my dear, when man departs from hence, his speech is merged in his mind, his mind in his breath, his breath in fire, fire in the highest deity.

On this the commentators remark that at the death of a man his relatives and friends first say: "He speaks no more,"—so speech has withdrawn; then they say: "He perceives no longer,"—the mind has been dissolved in the vital airs; then, "He moves no longer",—the principle of life, the vital air, has escaped; and finally, "He is cold",—the warmth of life has been dissolved in the element of fire. From this it is inferred that the soul has entered into the Supreme Being. Of course, the author of the Upanishad meant this in the sense of liberation, which is dissolution in the Supreme Being. But Śankara makes use of the passage for a description of the migration of the Self into the other world and back again. He observes that the voice (speech) is only the representative of the other senses and that these are intended here, according to the passage in Praśna Upanishad III, 9:

Fire is the rising breath of life, wherefore he whose fire is extinct, with his organs, which have entered the mind, comes to a new birth.

The organs of perception and of action have their origin in the mind, and they retire into it, when the great journey begins. But that which enters the mind are not the organs themselves but only their functions. Therefore also, what enters the breath of life, is not the mind itself, but only its functions. The mind, together with the organs of perception and action, really belong to the body, and with the body they are decomposed. Fire is interpreted by Śankara to mean "the



overseer over the cage of the body and the organs", and that would be the individual soul. Of course, the above passage says nothing about that soul, but it is mentioned in *Bṛihadār. Upanishad* iv, 3, 38:

As policemen, magistrates, equerries, and governors gather round a king who is departing, thus do all the organs of the senses gather round the Self at the time of death, when a man breathes his last.

By this passage Śāṅkara thinks himself justified in interpreting fire as the individual soul, which, however, does not prevent him from interpreting it afterwards as the element of fire and all the other elements. For the latter in their subtile form (*tanmātrās*) are the "seed of the body". Such, according to Śāṅkara, is the return of the individual soul to the Godhead, from whence it has to start again on a new journey into earthly existence.

The soul thus retired into itself and into the absolute Self, in death puts off the gross body, as one puts off a dress when it has become dirty or worn out. But Śāṅkara, idealist though he be, cannot conceive of a living being without a material substratum; and in his system two more bodies are available, of which at least one, *viz.*, the subtile body, although invisible, belongs to the sphere of material existence. Śāṅkara calls this organism "the seed of the body, consisting of the subtile parts of the elements (*dehavījāni sūkshmaśūtrāṇi*)". He finds an allusion to this seed in the "fire", mentioned in the passage quoted above, and likewise in the "waters" and "faith", occurring in another *Upanishad* passage. This subtile body has dimensions, is transparent and invisible. On account of its extension it can move on its journey; transparency gives it the possibility of leaving the gross body without hinderance after death. The soul goes on its journey wrapped in this subtile body. Of course, there is no proof of this, the subtile body being imperceptible to the senses. It is merely an assumption without any scriptural authority, for in the *Upanishads* the subtile body is not mentioned.

The moving principle, the cause of transmigration, which moreover gives it its definite direction for the several individual

souls, is what Deussen calls "the moral determination of the soul". If the subtle body is the material substratum (*bhūtāśraya*), this moral determination is the moral substratum of the wandering soul (*karmāśraya*). Now what about this moral substratum? "What becomes of man after the dissolution of the body and its organs into the elements?" so some one asks the wise Yājñavalkya in Bṛihadār. Upanishad III, 2, 13. The sage takes the questioner apart, and, as it were, whispers the answer into his ear. "And what they talked about was works; and what they praised was works; man becomes good through good works and bad through bad works." The moral substratum by which transmigration is regulated are the good and evil actions of man while he lives in the gross body. What Śankara means here may be called the moral character of man, which is built up by the actions of man on the basis of hereditary disposition. Here, too, Śankara is, as Deussen admits, not consistent, owing to his misinterpretation of the Upanishads and to his endeavour to unite two contradictory views into one system.

To describe the moral substratum (*karmāśraya*) of the soul Śankara quotes Bṛihadār. Up. III, 4, 2:

When it (the Self) thus departs, the breath of life departs after it. And when the breath (the principle) of life departs, all the other breaths of life depart after it. It is endowed with knowledge and they depart after that which is endowed with knowledge. Knowledge and works take hold of it, and likewise its former experience.

The subject of this statement is the individual Self. It is endowed with knowledge, which perhaps here means consciousness. With consciousness the principle of life and with it all the other functions of life depart from the body. Then the soul is taken hold of by knowledge, "by works, and by its former experience". Deussen here wants to read "newly gained experience (*apūrva prajñā*)" instead of "former experience (*pūrvaprajñā*)". Śankara sees in that "former experience" the result of human actions in the soul, which he calls *vāsanā*, the thing remaining, the disposition. In so far as the latter is the

consequence of moral actions—and according to Śāṅkara every disposition is caused by the actions of former births—, it belongs to the moral character, to the moral determination of the soul. Śāṅkara rejects the *apūrva* = what was not before, what is new. He probably rejects this conception because it belongs to the Pūrvamīmāṃsā school. The word means that portion of the works which continues to exist when the works themselves have perished, and which does not yet offer itself as fruit for fruition. We see what close affinity the *apūrva* bears to the moral determination of the soul. It has also affinity to the “destiny (*adṛishṭa*)” of the Vaiśeṣika system, but the idea does not fit in with the Vedānta. For, according to this system, the works are either collected in a state of quiescence (*samchita*), or in course of bearing fruit (*prārabdha*), or they are merely acting (*kriyāmāṇa*).

Clothed with the subtile body and provided with its moral determination, the soul, at the death of man, leaves the body and wanders into the invisible world. On its departure it withdraws into itself the mental part of its organs and their functions, and itself retires into the heart where, according to the general view of the Upanishads, it had always had its seat:

The point of his heart becomes lighted up, and by that light the Self departs, either through the eye, or through the skull, or through other places of the body. *Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 4, 2.*

The point of the heart is here mentioned, because there the arteries issue from the heart. There a light arises, but we are not told whence the light comes. In this light however, according to Śāṅkara, the roads of the knowing and non-knowing souls separate. The knowing souls leave the body through the head, the non-knowing through other parts of the body. This is proved from Chhāndogya Up. VIII, 6, 6:

The heart has a hundred and one arteries, one of which runs up to the head: he who rises by it gains immortality; the others afford exit in all directions.

The enlightened soul thus on this road repairs to the path of the gods, in order to enter into Brahman in the world of the gods. The ignorant soul, on the other hand, proceeds on the path of the fathers into the world of the fathers and to the moon, where recompense takes place. From there it starts, by the road described before, on a new migration into earthly existence. The end of it is unknown.

### THE PUNISHMENTS OF HELL AND THE "THIRD PLACE".

According to this it might seem as if the Vedānta assumed only a twofold fate of the soul after death: either liberating union with the Brahman, or migration through the moon to further births in the body. But the Vedānta has two more possibilities in store, *viz.*, the journey to the "third place", and the punishments of hell. The schoolmen find the doctrine concerning the punishments of hell in Kaṭha Up. II, 6, where Yama says of the fool: "He comes again and again under my rule." Originally this simply meant that he again and again becomes the prey of death. But to Śāṅkara Yama is not only the prince of death but also the king of the hell "Saṃyamana"; here those who did not apply themselves to works in their earthly life, or committed evil works, must undergo dreadful torments. Afterwards they return again to earth. Whereas those who showed their piety in performing religious rites and ceremonies go to the moon, it is said of the indifferent and the decidedly bad: "But the others go into Saṃyamana, the residence of Yama, where they suffer the Yama-torments that are due to their evil deeds, and then they descend again to this world. Such is the nature of their ascent and descent."<sup>1</sup>

With this, of course, Śāṅkara, together with his master Bādarāyaṇa, has left the philosopher's standpoint to join the Purāṇa poets, who moreover know how to paint those fiery hells

---

<sup>1</sup> Śāṅkara. See Deussen, *ibid.* p. 413.

in much more glowing colours, telling how the souls of men are roasted in big kettles, pinched with fiery tongs, and tormented with sulphur and pitch.

We are already acquainted with the "third place" of the Chhândogya Upanishad. At first sight one feels inclined to think it is hell. But Śankara is far from combining the "third place" with the house of Yama. The "third place" he thinks is the fate of those who, on account of their evil works during their human existence, are afterwards born as worms, flies, tigers, snakes, *etc.* It is difficult to understand why there should be three ways of punishment, *viz.*, repeated births in human life, the "third place", and the punishments of hell. For the exoteric mind of the non-initiated the mere wandering through repeated births would be sufficient to deter them from evil-doing and to induce them to seek wisdom and knowledge. But the accumulation of such terrors is quite in keeping with the genius of these Vedānta schoolmen. Moreover, we must not expect to find a regular, well arranged system in Śankara's writings. Deussen, who tries to make his doctrine palatable to the western mind, complains again and again of the obscurities and contradictions in Śankara's works. Thus we need not be surprised if, according to Deussen, he crowns the confusion of his remarks in his appeal to Kaushitaki Up. 1, 2: "All those who depart from this world go into the moon", when he simply declares: "All, that is, all those who are destined for it," which however has no justification either in text or context.

The moon, according to Kaushitaki Up. 1, 2, is the gate of heaven: "Truly, the moon is the entrance to the heavenly regions." According to a passage quoted before, however, the moon is the place of recompense for ceremonial works. According to Śankara's orthodox opinion this must be understood not as a punishment, but as a reward. And yet the Upanishad passage, on which the whole conception rests, says that these souls are eaten by the gods. In trying to bring these two views into harmony, Śankara shows himself a perfect master

of misinterpretation. To be eaten by the gods, he says, means only the closest communion with them, a pleasant intercourse, as with virtuous wives, sons, and friends. For "the gods do not eat and drink" (*Chhând. Up. II, 6, 1*). And yet, on the other hand, the gods consume these souls. They treat them thus, because these souls possess only works and not the knowledge of the Self, which alone can lead to the highest degree of bliss. But the chief drawback of their stay in the moon is that from thence the souls must return to earthly existence, some of them even on long roundabout roads. This shows that the stay in the moon cannot be considered a reward, neither can the moon itself be the gate to heaven.

Deussen rightly draws attention to the fact that, by the doctrine of repeated births into human life, the Vedânta gets entangled in a self-contradiction, because a recompense of works takes place already in the world beyond. This self-contradiction, of course, finds its historical explanation in the fact that originally only a recompense in the world beyond was known, into which older tree the later shoot of recompense by transmigration has been grafted. But Śankara attempts to explain how it is that the soul must start on the long migration of births, in spite of the recompense received in the world beyond. For this purpose he adduces the doctrine of "the remainder (*anuśaya*)". This doctrine is, of course, contrary to certain passages of the Upanishads, as for instance:

Having lived there (in the moon) as long as there is a remainder (of works), they return by the same road. *Chhând. Up. V, 10, 5*.

Or the following passage:

After he has received his reward for all that he committed here below, he returns from that world again into this world of works. *Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 4, 6*.

In spite of these passages Śankara says the recompense in the world beyond leaves a remainder of works unrecompensed.

The proof is very strange: While in the moon the works are consumed by being fed upon, also the "watery frame (*ammayam śarīram*)" of the soul or more correctly, the body of the soul formed out of the sacrifice, by means of which the soul can stay in the moon, is dissolved like hoarfrost in the sun, or like butter on the fire. This dissolution of the body that is made up of the elementary substance of the food and water, is brought about more quickly and finished earlier than the consuming of works, so that the soul is obliged to return with a remainder of works. But Śankara does not explain why the one process is finished earlier than the other, and so betrays the arbitrariness of his explanation. In support of his view he quotes Chhānd. Up. v, 10, 7. The passage says that those whose conduct was good are born in higher castes, but those whose conduct was bad are born as animals. Śankara declares that the word "conduct (*charaṇa*)" here means the remainder of works, which is, of course, quite arbitrary. Another proof given by Śankara which is repeated by Vedāntists up to our days, is very remarkable. He says it is a fact that earthly goods are divided among men from their birth in quite a different measure, from the highest amount of wealth down to the deepest poverty; but there is nothing without a cause; and the cause of that fact is the "remainder of works". As if there were no other and no more obvious reasons for the difference between rich and poor!

It is amusing to see how Śankara tries to illustrate the nature of that remainder. It may be imagined as a glutinous fluid, sticking to the walls of a vessel. Those who return from the moon with the remainder of their works are like an Indian courtier whose dress and umbrella have become threadbare and ragged during his service at the king's court, and who therefore cannot stay there any longer. Śankara himself sees that these illustrations do not prove or explain anything. He therefore distinguishes two kinds of works: (1) such as are matured and recompensed in the world beyond; (2) such as are only matured and recompensed during new earthly existences. The words in the verse quoted above, "Of

all that he committed here", relate to the former kind of works. And if the scriptures call death "the revealer of works", this must also be referred to the works recompensed in the world beyond, for during earthly existence there are other works to be recompensed. Śankara, we see, takes little trouble with his proof: he assumes the dogma of the repeated births and then infers these two kinds of works, and the "remainder". But what was to be proved was that, besides the recompense in the world beyond, a further recompense by transmigration was necessary. He explained this necessity by the assumption of the "remainder" of works. And afterwards he supports this assumption by the very thing which was to be proved.

Another objection arises against the assumption of the "remainder of works": if there is always a remainder of the works, how then can liberation be obtained? With regard to this Śankara adduces the knowledge of the Brahman by which all works together with their fruits are done away with without leaving a remainder. This is the only ray of light falling from the standpoint of esoteric wisdom upon this dark point, where the mind is oppressed and bewildered not only with the sufferings of innumerable births and the unspeakable torments of hell, but also with the artificial interpretations and the self-contradictions in the remarks of the philosopher. Deussen believes he has found another ray of light in the distinction between ritual performances and moral actions, of which the former would find their recompense in the world beyond, the latter in transmigration. But Deussen himself is constrained to abandon this ray of light. It would in fact be difficult to find this distinction in Śankara's works: to him "*karman*" is work, and he little cares for the distinction between moral and ritual works. He would scarcely have valued moral actions higher than ritual works; or rather, he would scarcely have demanded a heavier punishment for moral offences than for mistakes made in, or omissions of, ritual performances. In reality his whole exposition of the doctrine of transmigration



is quite superfluous. From the esoteric point of view there is no real transmigration, but only a false, delusive conception of the same, which deceives the individual soul. Why then does Śankara, who, from his standpoint, must know better, by his detailed exposition of the subject contribute towards the establishment of a delusion which causes such endless misery? His distinction between a higher and a lower point of view really results in playing with the anguish and sufferings of the non-initiated.

On its return from the world beyond, the soul, according to Śankara, travels through exactly the same stages as during its ascent. Deussen calls attention to the fact that the order of these stages corresponds to the order in which the elements originated out of the Brahman, *i.e.*, ether, air, smoke (or *fire*), clouds and rain (or *water*), plants and food (or *earth*). At last the soul arrives in the human womb and is born. Is this to be taken as a hint that the process of re-birth and that of the origin of creatures from the Brahman are really identical, and that both are merely products of illusion and ignorance? Śankara assumes that the stay in the respective stages does not last very long; only of the issue from the plants was it said:

From thence, really, it is more difficult to come out. *Chhānd. Up. V, 10, 6.*

If it is here more difficult, then it must be easier at the other stages, and the journey there must go on faster. But we remember how very intricate the path may become at the stage of "rain"; wherefore in the majority of cases the migration would have to go on through innumerable years.

A further difficulty is in the relation of the soul to the elements with which it comes into contact on its journey from the world beyond back to this world. The wording of the Upanishad passage suggests that the soul is really changed into ether, air, smoke, rain, *etc.* Śankara does not admit this, but says that the soul is with the elements only as a guest, as it were, that it is only transformed, by means of a certain assimilation.

lation, into a state similar to the respective element; else it would have to remain in that element for ever, as there is no transition from one element to the other. All these difficulties and their solution are based on an entirely materialistic view of the soul, to which he inevitably falls a victim, who sees the essence of the soul in anything but self-consciousness. From the same error arises Śankara's declaration that the soul, on entering plants, does not become a plant-soul; that on the contrary the plants have their own souls, with which the souls that enter the plants only share their dwelling-place but not the same pleasures and pains. In reality it is an impossible conception that the human soul, which is endowed with self-consciousness, should live in a plant, which does not even possess animal consciousness.

It is also interesting to note that Śankara here refutes the idea that the entrance into a plant is a punishment for having killed animals at sacrifices during a former birth. Generally, he says, it is forbidden to kill animals; but killing them for a sacrifice is an exception permitted by the scriptures (*śruti*), which therefore must go unpunished. We have seen before, in considering the "third place", how the soul may also come into the bodies of animals. Moreover many animals live upon plants and in doing so are likely to receive human souls into themselves. Śankara further says that in father and mother also the soul dwells only as a guest. From here it again enters the world to pay the penalty for the remainder of works, and at the same time to gather new fruits, either of merit or demerit, which then must lead to new births again in interminable succession. The whole doctrine of transmigration is summed up in a passage of the Rāmāyaṇa, which runs as follows:

By the works of former existence the soul is born with a new body again and again; and again by the works of a new birth; thus the body is ever the destiny of the soul. As a man puts off old clothes and puts on new clothes again, so the soul puts off the old body in order to put on a new body. *Rāmāyaṇa II, 7, 113. 114.*

It is not without reason that Śankara, as Deussen complains, in the elucidation of the aphorisms of Bādarāyaṇa relating to transmigration, is again and again involved in difficulties and self-contradictions, from which only bold, sophistic interpretation can find a way out. To an unbiassed examination this whole doctrine is encumbered with a number of absolute impossibilities, which are so evident that they need not be pointed out in detail.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF METEMPSYCHOSIS EXAMINED.

Supposing there was really such a thing as transmigration, nobody could know anything of it, because it is hidden not only from perception by the senses, but also from all conscious experience. If transmigration were a reality, there must of course be an experience of its pains and sufferings, and at the time of the experience also consciousness of the same. But on the journey from this world to the world beyond and *vice versa* the consciousness of it is, as many Vedāntists themselves say, so completely extinguished that nobody remembers his former births. According to the popular view, the continuity of consciousness is entirely broken off in the act of being born, in consequence of the pain with which the child enters into this world. Therefore, it is impossible to adduce even the shadow of a proof for this doctrine. The scriptural proofs from the Upanishad stand themselves in need of being proved even to Śankara's orthodox mind, and they would only be conclusive, if they were supported by clear, unquestionable facts of experience. Śankara, it is true, appeals to experience, for instance, to the fact known to all of us, that earthly happiness is unequally distributed from the very birth of man. But this fact can be more easily explained by other reasons. And although it must partly remain a mystery, nobody who does not already believe in the doctrine of transmigration would be led to that conclusion by the mere fact of the unequal distribution of earthly goods and sufferings.

In passing we may once more recall the fact that there is not a trace of that doctrine to be found in the most ancient parts of the Veda. It is the ingenuity of theosophic sages that has invented or adopted this doctrine.

We fully acknowledge the eternal truth that underlies the doctrine of recompense. It is eternally true that man must reap what he has sown by his words and deeds. But this truth is not sufficient to prove the assumption that man must bear the ever new consequences of ever new works in endless wanderings from birth to birth. This extravagant exaggeration of a good and true idea takes away the value of that grain of truth that is contained in the doctrine. A recompense of such good and evil works of which man has no consciousness, and which without, or even against, his own will involves him in ever new consequences of his works, which therefore destroys his responsibility for his present life, is not in accordance with justice and moral law, but reveals a cruelty unworthy of God, whatever our conceptions of Him otherwise may be. And that must prove fatal to this doctrine. All sound religious sentiment shrinks from making the Supreme Being the author of a law which is as cruel as it is unjust.

The moral consciousness of the Indian people, quickened in the light of historical life and Christian civilization, must revolt against that doctrine, and, unconsciously and unwillingly, step by step, as it were emancipate itself from that doctrine. Even now some educated Hindus do not seriously believe it. And to the Vedāntists of Śāṅkara's school transmigration is an illusion, a product of ignorance; and an educated man must seriously renounce a deceitful illusion which has its sole cause in non-knowledge, that is, in ignorance.

This doctrine, therefore, is not worth the defence of educated men. Śāṅkara from his esoteric point of view simply throws it overboard. Only obstinate dogmatism or mistaken patriotism can feel called upon to defend it. It will be well when this belief is eradicated from the mind of the Indian people.

## II. THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF EVIL.

### 1. THE BIBLICAL CONCEPTION OF SIN.

In Hinduism the doctrine of transmigration, which includes all sufferings and evils, has destroyed the consciousness of sin, as moral evil and turned the notion of sin into that of phenomenal evil and suffering. In Christianity the teaching is entirely different. In the Christian faith the notion of sin is much more important than the notion of evil. It may be said that man begins to become a true Christian as soon as the sense of sin begins to dawn upon him. And Christ has come to deliver men in the first place from sin, and then from evil. Also genetically and logically sin, according to the Christian faith, takes the first, and evil the second place; the former is the cause, the latter the consequence.

#### GENERAL BIBLICAL NOTION OF SIN.

According to the Bible, where we find the Christian conception of sin and evil in its simplest and purest form, sin in general is disobedience to the will of God, which has somehow been revealed to man. The original meaning of the words which are used in the Bible for sin, is deviation from the right path as prescribed by the will of God. Similarly sin is often called transgression or trespass (Rom. v, 14; Ephes. ii, 1). Still more distinctly sin is called lawlessness: "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii, 4). For the law is nothing but the revealed will of God. Therefore every violation of God's law, all disobedience to it, is sin against God, and so sin in the Bible is often simply called disobedience, unrighteousness, or iniquity, according to its character or the extent to which it is developed. But a stand-

ard of conduct, a divine law, is always presupposed, against which sin is a trespass, and by which sin is made known to man. This law is always the expression of God's will, and everything that is contrary to that will of God is a sin against God according to the Bible.

#### THE LAW OF GOD WRITTEN IN MAN'S HEART.

The most general law which God has given to men is written in their hearts. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law (of Moses), do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. II, 14). That there is indeed for nations standing outside the sphere of God's special revelation, a law written in the heart, *i.e.*, in their moral consciousness, concerning that which is morally good and morally evil, becomes sufficiently evident by what we have quoted concerning sin and evil from the documents of Hinduism. The laws of Varuṇa, so far as they serve man as a standard of conduct and for the knowledge of his sin, were written nowhere but in the hearts of the Vedic poets and very probably also of their people. We have learnt from the Mahābhārata that, in ancient times, men protected each other by their virtue. But virtue is *dharma*, which means law. It is indeed the law written in man's heart. Such law written in their hearts was and is not unknown to other non-Christian nations also. The memorable words which the Greek poet Sophocles puts into the mouth of Antigone are universally known: "And I did not think thy proclamation so high, O king, that such human words should be thought higher than the unwritten, immutable laws of Heaven." According to the context, these words have reference to an act of piety towards a brother, as demanded by the moral law, which, as one of Heaven's unwritten, immutable laws, was written in the consciousness of Antigone. It is not our province here to inquire into the origin of this law. It

generally appears as moral sentiments and ideas handed down from the forefathers, a tradition which, as we know, is not quite wanting even among uncivilised races. According to the Bible we may consider it an inheritance which the nations of the earth brought with them from their common ancestral home. The traditions of the nations themselves point back to that origin.

### THE LAW OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

But in the Bible there is also a special law given directly by God, for that unwritten law has been much obscured and impaired, wherefore it is no longer sufficient for the knowledge of God's will. First of all God has revealed His will to the people of Israel through Moses, and this law finds its most concise and pregnant expression in the "Ten Commandments" (Exod. xx, 1—17; Deut. v, 6—22), to which there are somewhat similar precepts in the religious literature of India. According to this law, the actions, the words, and the thoughts of men are judged; and what is contrary to this law they condemn as sin.

Already from this law, which presents itself in the form of a prohibition of all that is evil and therefore as a barrier against sin, it appears distinctly that the Bible not only condemns as sin what are usually called immoral deeds, but also evil words, evil thoughts, evil desires. The Ten Commandments forbid and condemn as sin the worship of any other than the one true God, *i.e.*, polytheism; the worship of the one true God by means of images, *i.e.*, idolatry, which drags the Supreme Being down into the sphere of created things and therefore leads to polytheism; also the improper use of God's name for purposes of perjury and sorcery, the disregard of the day of rest appointed by God, and dishonour to parents, who are God's representatives for their children. And the neglect of our duties towards our neighbour, who has been created by God in His own image, is according

to the Decalogue also a sin against God. Therefore no outrage is be committed against a neighbour's life by murder, against a neighbour's wife by adultery and fornication, against a neighbour's property by theft or robbery, against a neighbour's good name and honour by giving false witness against him. And finally the Tenth Commandment forbids every disorderly, evil desire, from which arises the evil deed that brings harm to our neighbour. By thus forbidding sins against God Himself as well as sins against our fellowmen, the Decalogue is of lasting importance for the moral well-being of human society and for the knowledge of sin in our life and nature.

It agrees with this fundamental law of the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament that Moses and the prophets strictly condemn idolatry in any shape as a sin against God. This prohibition of polytheism and idolatry is in the Decalogue followed by the awful announcement: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself before them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exod. xx, 5). Likewise the prophets again and again rebuke the Israelites for the sin of idolatry, of unfaithfulness to the only true God, who had revealed Himself to them: "Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made" (Is. ii, 8). "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cistern that can hold no water" (Jerem. ii, 13). The whole history of this nation shows that the periods in which idolatry prevailed were always periods of national decline and misfortune; and that periods of national prosperity and ascendancy were always introduced by the people and their leaders turning again to the one true God, who had made Himself known to Israel. Finally, according to the unanimous testimony of the prophets, the catastrophe by which the national independence of Israel was lost, was the consequence of the



immoral idolatry which the Israelites adopted from the Canaanite tribes, and which Israel would never give up. In the interests of the Indian people it is most desirable that educated Hindus, who think themselves called upon to excuse and defend idolatry, should realise how solemnly and seriously God visits the sin of idolatry among their people and other nations up to the present day. For in this country, too, the one true God "will not give His praise to graven images" (Is. XLII, 8).

But the prophets by no means forget man's sins against his neighbours. As according to the Decalogue every offence against our neighbour is a sin against God, so all the wrong done by a man to his neighbour is not only rebuked in general by the prophets, as a thing which ought not to be, but as a sin against God's holy will. "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood . . . How is the faithful city become an harlot! she that was full of judgement! righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers . . . Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them" (Is. i, 15—31). How often do the prophets proclaim awful woe upon the acts of violence and outrage of the rich and mighty, and the luxury, frivolity, and debauchery connected with it: "Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name: and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge, in the house of their God, and they drink the wine of such as have been fined" (Amos II, 6—8. Compare Amos IV, 1).

## JUDGEMENT OF SIN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Most pathetic are the prayers of the prophets, in which they confess the sins of their nation before God: "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them: in transgressing and lying against the Lord, and turning away from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. . . . Yea, truth is lacking; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgement" (Is. LIX, 12—15. Comp. Is. LXIII, 7—LXIV, 12; Daniel IX, 4—19; Ps. XXXII, LI). Here we notice a knowledge of sin of such depth as we do not meet with anywhere else in the sacred books of non-Christian religions, and which can only be produced by the revelation of the true God, who is the Holy One.

This deep and true knowledge of sin on the part of the men of the Old Testament is in itself a sufficient proof that the living God had revealed Himself and had come to meet them with the light of His holiness and righteousness. Further the Old Testament unsparingly discloses the sins of the servants of God, without in the least palliating or excusing them. Abraham and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, fall into sin and God's judgement, and God's punishment unsparingly comes upon them. The fall of David is particularly instructive. In an idle hour he succumbs at the sight of the beautiful wife of one of his officers who has gone to the front. He commits adultery, and then he causes the death of the husband of that woman. Such things would happen times without number at Eastern courts, and the wise men who condemned them in their hearts, would only venture to express their disapproval in general terms. Not so in Israel, where the holy will of God was the supreme law, to which also the king must render implicit obedience. The prophet Nathan, then the representative of that law, came to

the king and by means of a fable, as beautiful as it is serious, made the king pronounce his own judgement, and then told him to his face: "Thou art the man!" At any other oriental court such boldness would have cost him his life, and even at western courts it would have been impossible for him to remain. But in Israel the king humbled himself, and the prophet having announced God's pardon left the palace, with his head erect and with his influence at court more firmly established than before (2 Sam. xi and xii). This story, which could not have been invented, bears witness to God's real revelation and the authority of God's law in Israel.

#### GOD'S LAW REVEALED IN JESUS CHRIST.

But in the most perfect manner God has revealed His good and holy will in Christ Jesus. Non-Christians, especially educated Hindus of an earnest turn of mind, often frankly express their sincere admiration for the "moral teaching" of Jesus, for instance, in the Sermon on the Mount. These words, so simple and yet so deep and original, find a direct echo and a willing consent in the uncorrupted moral consciousness of mankind, for they are the perfect expression of the will of God. It is, however, not only the teaching of Jesus, by which he reveals to us the will of God; his whole person and his whole life are a revelation of God and His holy will (compare John xii, 49. 50; xiv, 9. 10). Christ's pure, holy life, his humble service to the poor and sick, his self-denying obedience in the work committed to him, his renunciation of his own honour and well-being, his obedient, innocent, patient suffering and death, his holy, righteous, truthful, loving personality—in a word, he himself, the incomparable Son of Man, is the perfect revelation of God's holy will. As he was, so we all ought to be. What is not like him, what is not in harmony with his word and life, what leads away from him and is hostile to him—all that is sin before God. By him,

who is the embodiment of righteousness and the perfect revelation of God's will, human sin is revealed in its true nature. More especially the sufferings and death of Jesus are the most powerful revelation and condemnation of human sin. His innocence, his steadfastness, his humility and patience, his pardoning love to his enemies, his all-suffering love for his disciples, and finally the moral majesty with which he stands before his captors and judges, throw a humiliating light on the inconstancy of his disciples, on the faithlessness of his betrayer, on the fickleness and ingratitude of his people, on the blind hatred and the tyranny of his enemies, on the injustice and indifference of his judge, so that human sin is here revealed in all its shame and abomination, and absolutely condemned.

#### CHRIST'S TESTIMONY AGAINST SIN.

In the testimony of Jesus against sin (John VII, 7) we may also, as in the Old Testament, distinguish a moral and a religious aspect of sin. Like the prophets, Jesus calls down woe upon the leaders of his people, for trampling upon the primary commandments of love to their neighbours: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation" (Matth. XXIII, 14. Comp. also Mark VII, 6 — 11). And how powerfully does Jesus reveal the root of all sin and moral corruption in the heart of men: "For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed; fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within and defile the man" (Mark VII, 21 — 23). With this may be compared the interpretation of the Old Testament law in the Sermon on the Mount, by which Jesus takes the veil from our eyes and reveals to us the guilt and the corruption of sin in a depth never known before: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt

not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement: but I say unto you, That even one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement; and whosoever shall say unto his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. . . . Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matth. v, 21 — 28). So earnestly does Jesus deal with sin, and so deeply does he attack it at its root: not only the outward action, but also a word, a thought, an unchaste look are sin against God. The rich man in the parable comes to the place of torment, not for having lived in luxury, but for having had no pity on poor Lazarus (Luke xvi, 19—31). And how crushingly does Christ rebuke without words the priest and Levite in the parable of the good Samaritan—not for having committed an act of wickedness, but for having had no pity on their neighbour who had fallen among thieves (Luke x, 30 — 37). St. James condenses much of the teaching of Jesus into the saying: "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv, 17).

#### THE SIN OF UNBELIEF.

But that sin against which Jesus had to fight all his earthly life, and which at last caused his death, was the unbelief of the Jews. He was conscious of having brought the greatest and best thing to mankind intended for them by God: pardon for their sins and eternal life in the kingdom of God. To be indifferent to these highest gifts of God, to reject them in worldliness and unbelief—that is the sin of all sins. Faith, according to Jesus, is essentially an act of obedience to the gracious will of God, revealed in his person and mission. Hence unbelief is disobedience to God. Therefore Jesus once began to upbraid the cities in which most of his mighty works

had been done, and which yet had not repented and accepted his message of mercy: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Howbeit I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement than for you" (Matth. XI, 21. 22). In Jesus and his works, which were always accompanied by words full of eternal life, the highest gift of God had been offered to these cities. They might have been expected to repent and to accept this gift of salvation by faith in Jesus. That they did not do so was their sin, which must necessarily be followed by the heaviest judgement.

In the last days of his earthly life Jesus has a similar complaint to make against the Jewish capital: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matth. XXIII, 37. 38). Here the sin of Jerusalem consists in refusing to believe in Jesus, the highest of all God's messengers. For this unbelief he announces God's judgement, which indeed came soon.

More especially in the Gospel of St. John, where the innermost nature, the deepest principles of his work are revealed in wonderful simplicity and clearness, Jesus repeatedly and urgently points out to his hearers and partial adherents the sin of unbelief and its fatal consequences: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come. . . For except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John VIII, 21—24. Comp. also John XII, 47. 48). The hearers of Jesus are burdened with many sins. But their chief sin is their unbelief in him, who came to deliver them from sin. Had they faith in him, the saviour promised by God, they might be saved. But their unbelief becomes the cause of their ruin. Therefore it will be the

chief work of the Spirit, whom Jesus promises his disciples as a compensation for his bodily presence, to convince the world of the sin of unbelief, and if possible to lead it to repentance and righteousness by faith in Christ: "And when he (the Advocate or Helper) is come, he will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged" (John xvi, 8—11). Here it is the most grievous sin of the world, that they do not believe in Jesus who has come to save them from sin. Opposite to this sin stands the righteousness of Jesus, who, though condemned to a criminal's death on the cross, had, through that very death, gone to resurrection and glory with his Father, and thus was set forth as the righteous one, who alone can give righteousness and salvation to the world.

#### THE SIN AGAINST THE SPIRIT.

But the Spirit of God, who will accomplish this work in the world, rested already on Jesus himself during his earthly life, and manifested himself to men, from within and from without, through the deeds and words of Jesus. It is this witness of the Spirit to the words of Christ, audible in the hearts and consciences of men, which renders the unbelieving rejection, and above all, the malicious reviling of his words and deeds so dangerous and so fatal. The most remarkable word which Jesus has spoken concerning sin refers to this. By a simple word, spoken in the power of the Spirit, he had delivered a poor demoniac from the power of the demons, which at his time possessed and tormented so many persons. After this deed the people were once more inclined to accept him as the Messiah sent by God, the ruler of the kingdom of God. But the Pharisees declared that he was casting out demons with the help of Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that is, with the help of Satan himself. To this malicious

charge he gives this reply: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matth. xii, 22—32).

In the healing of the demoniac it was evident that the work of Christ was being done by the Spirit and power of God. His enemies could have seen that, unless they had hardened their hearts of set purpose against better conviction and the influence of the Spirit. But even then their consciences must have told them that they had pronounced a malicious blasphemy. This, however, was not reviling the human person of Christ, which perhaps might be misconceived in its lowliness, but it was blaspheming the Spirit of God who made himself distinctly known in his wonderful works. But he who thus blasphemes the Spirit of God is on the way to completely harden himself in unbelief, from which there can be no repentance and no pardon. This is the height of sin, where the results of its fatal development in the moral and in the religious sphere unite, *viz.*, total dishonesty and falsehood of judgement prejudiced by hatred and turning away from God and his salvation. Jesus does not say that the Pharisees have already fallen a victim to this judgement, but he warns them not to continue in their way of unbelief and malice, because it must inevitably lead to blaspheming the Spirit and hardening of heart. And the beginning of this mischievous development is in that self-complacency, self-satisfaction, and self-confidence, which thinks "I am rich, and have gotten riches and have need of nothing", and therefore with excuses and pretexts rejects the truth and the salvation of God.



## THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES AGAINST SIN.

## 1. ST. PETER'S TESTIMONY.

In the testimony of the apostles we also meet with the same double aspect of sin. In his sermon to the Jews and their leaders, which we read in the first chapters of the Acts, St. Peter repeatedly exposes the unbelief of the Jews, which impelled them to crucify Christ, the righteous one, and on which God had pronounced judgement through the resurrection of Jesus: "Him, being delivered up by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death. . . , whereof we are all witnesses" (Acts II, 23. 24. 32). "Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts III, 14. 15). To such words the warning is always added: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts III, 19). But apart from the sin of unbelief, Peter also knows the specifically moral corruption of sin: "For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, wine-bibblings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries; wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (1 Peter IV, 3—5). The use of the first person might lead us to suppose that St. Peter, in the same way as his readers, had committed the sins he enumerates. But, as far as we know his history, he was always a pious Israelite and obedient to the law, although sometimes fickle in his attitude towards his Master. What he describes here are the sins of that time. His readers knew those sins from their own experience, and the apostle reminds them of the abyss of moral corruption from which they had been delivered through Christ. Debauchery,

intemperance, and idolatry are here, as is usually the case, most closely connected. In the second epistle of St. Peter (chapter II), in the epistle of St. Jude, and likewise in that of St. James (III, 1—12; V, 1—6) these sins are exposed in stringent and unsparing terms.

## 2. ST. JAMES'S TESTIMONY AGAINST SIN.

In the epistle of St. James there is one passage that deserves consideration in this connection. Among those to whom this epistle is addressed some persons seem to have tried to throw the responsibility for sin upon God under the pretext that temptation came from God. To them and to all those who do so thoughtlessly, St. James says: "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death" (James I, 13—15). These are words of a man who had his faith firmly rooted in the one true God. In proof of the truth that temptation to sin cannot come from God, he appeals to the conscience and the moral experience of his readers. Every man knows that sin comes from evil lust, and that lust originates within, *i.e.*, in man's own corrupt nature. And then, by means of a bold simile, St. James traces the development of sin. Lust is a dissolute woman, who with her charms and wiles seduces men to indulge in the practice of unlawful pleasure. The fruit of this immoral connection is the evil, sinful deed. When the daughter has reached maturity she, in her turn, gives birth to a son, worse than herself, *viz.*, death,—physical, moral, and eternal ruin. As Schiller has it: "This is the curse of the evil deed, that, continuing to generate, it ever must bring forth evil." The truth that God cannot be the originator of sin, which is disobedience against His holy will, is not only emphatically stated here, but underlies

the biblical conception of sin everywhere, and especially the biblical conception of the culpability of sinful actions. Sin could never be liable to the punishment of a righteous God, if man were not alone responsible for it.

### 3. ST. JOHN'S TESTIMONY AGAINST SIN.

The apostle John, at first sight, does not seem to distinguish between sin in the moral and in the religious sphere. To him all that is contrary to the law, the revealed will of God, is absolutely sin. Here also he lays bare the deepest roots of things: the kingdom of darkness with its prince is to him the place from which evil issues forth: "He that committeth sin is from the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John III, 4—8). Therefore whosoever is of God cannot commit sin, because light and darkness, God and Satan, are absolutely opposed to each other. But it is remarkable that, according to John, the apostle of love, in the specifically moral sphere hatred, including want of love, is the sin which connects man with Satan, the prince of darkness (1 John III, 11—18). In the religious sphere the sin that corresponds to hatred in the moral sphere is unbelief, which denies that Jesus, the son of God, has come in the flesh. He, that does that, is a liar and antichrist (1 John II, 18—23). This is evidently also the sin unto death, for which, according to St. John, no intercession is to be made, because for the conscious denial of Jesus being the son of God there is no forgiveness. With regard to Him who is the true God and eternal life, St. John also warns his readers against the sin of idolatry, *i.e.*, devotion to created objects of confidence and love, which with those who deny the son of God inevitably take His place (1 John v, 15—21).

### 4. ST. PAUL'S TEACHING CONCERNING SIN.

The doctrine of sin is treated most thoroughly and most comprehensively by the apostle Paul. On the basis of his own

experience and that of others he declares, "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. III, 22. 23). The truth of this judgement he proves by a powerful description of the moral condition of the Gentiles and the Jews of his time (Rom. I, 18 — III, 20). Especially in his description of heathenism (Rom. I, 18 — 32), he shows the inner development of sin and the close connection between moral perversion and religious error. According to this exposition the fundamental sin of the heathen world is, that men "hold down the truth in unrighteousness". What he means by "truth" the apostle says himself: "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them." The truth which the apostle means here is the knowledge of God, so far as it is accessible to man. That God is only one, and that this one God created heaven and earth with all that is in them, mankind understood at all times; and even after their belief in God had degenerated into polytheism, this knowledge again and again dawned upon them. But the heathen world never drew practical consequences from this belief; on the contrary, it always set it aside, either knowingly, or instinctively through the perversion of a bad conscience, but always in consequence of unrighteousness, *i.e.*, of sins against moral law. The consciousness of their own unrighteousness and the fear of God's punishment led men to neglect or abandon the knowledge of God which had been given them. The apostle does not refer here to the knowledge of God which was most probably current among the nations from primeval times, although he would certainly not have denied its existence. But here he points emphatically to the fact that the knowledge of the Creator, since the days of creation, manifests itself to the human mind in the works of creation. This is certainly no less true in our day, in the face of the splendid progress of science, than it was in those times, when there was no natural science worth mentioning. We may, however, call attention to the fact that, with regard to religion, the human mind never resembled a blank page, but

that the name of God was deeply engraved in human consciousness and therefore man's observation of nature was directed towards the Creator of the world. Thus the rejection of their knowledge of God was indeed a sin.

To this first sin on the part of the heathen world another one was added, *viz.*, ingratitude: "Because that knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks" (Rom. i, 21). The great number of Vedic hymns is no evidence against this; for in them the praise of the gods is not so much the outcome of gratitude, as prompted by a desire for new gifts and favours. Now when men did not give God the honour due to Him, their knowledge of God was more and more obscured: their hearts, from which the light of the knowledge of God was banished, grew dark, so that they became vain in their thoughts, because the latter had no longer a suitable object. And if a mind is empty, pride and conceit will enter into it: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Thus the door was opened for polytheism and idolatry, by which the glory of God, His imperishable, supreme nature, was dragged down to the level of created beings, of man, and even of beasts. We remember how in the creation-hymns of the R̥gveda the gods appear in the form of creatures. In the face of the sophistry with which idolatry and polytheism are defended even by people who ought to know better, it is only right to draw attention to the seriousness with which the apostle judges of those errors: "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. i, 25). The consequence of this religious error was horrible corruption in the sphere of sexual morality: "Wherefore God also gave them up in the lusts of their own hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonoured among themselves" (Rom. i, 24—28). It is remarkable that the apostle considers this moral corruption as a divine punishment for idolatry. For where God withdraws His hand because man denies Him, or puts creatures in His

place, there man has lost his moral strength, and there is no more barrier against, and no remedy for, the most disgraceful and physically fatal corruption of sin. It is a kind of natural law in the moral world, that sin is punished with the slavery of sin, and further, with moral, mental, and physical ruin. In this way God, through the consequences of sin, erects a kind of barrier against the excessive growth of sin, by causing within the sinner the decay of his ability to continue to sin. Thus, according to the apostle, moral trespass is succeeded by religious error, and religious error by moral ruin, and in this whole development the judgement of God on the unrighteousness and sin of men is accomplished.

St. Paul also draws a picture of sin and its corruption among the Jews. Their sin in the sphere of religion is the proud conceit that the possession of divine truth, and not obedience to it, makes man righteous before, and acceptable to, God. The consequence of such conceit is a spirit of haughty fault-finding with others; whereas in the moral sphere the Jews themselves are really guilty of the violation of all the divine commandments. From these premisses the apostle can draw the conclusion that all men, Jews as well as Gentiles, are sinners before God, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgement of God" (Rom. III, 19; Rom. II, 1—3). This is a simple fact of experience which every honest man may be expected to admit. And if Swāmi Vivekānanda, in one of his Neo-Vedāntist lectures, contends that it is blasphemy to call man a corrupted sinner, the honest and earnest among his countrymen themselves will not believe him.

#### MAN A SLAVE TO SIN.

At any rate, the apostle, who has all accurate thinkers on his side, is of a different opinion: to him the sin and guilt of man are an obvious fact. But he goes a step farther and shows (in Romans VII) that sin is a power, to which man is

subject and which he must obey against his will. So deep has man fallen that he has not command of himself, but is ruled by sin. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but to do that which is good, is not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise" (Rom. vii, 18. 19). Those who set their heart upon doing good have at all times made the same complaint as the apostle does here. It is they who experience the power of sin as an undeniable fact, and not the thoughtless and careless, who play with sin or deny the difference between good and evil. From this simple fact of experience the apostle draws the conclusion: "But if what I would not that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me" (Rom. vii, 20). Sin thus is a weird, irresistible power that governs man. The apostle does not say this to excuse himself, but by way of a self-accusation: "But I am carnal, sold unto sin" (Rom. vii, 14). This is very much the same as what Jesus says: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John viii, 34). Paul must confess to himself that notwithstanding his consent to the law of God, notwithstanding all his zeal to fulfil it, he yet has trespassed against it and committed sin. Through this he has become a slave of sin, and sin has become his master.

#### ST. PAUL'S DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE FLESH.

He designates this corruption of sin here and elsewhere by the word *flesh*. In the Bible the word *flesh* generally means the body of man, and further the whole man as a created being, with a material body, in contradistinction to God, who is Spirit. Therefore some theologians and philosophers suppose that with the apostle Paul the word *flesh* means the material side of man, his sensual nature, *i.e.*, the predominance of matter in man over his spirit. This opinion may also take the form, that, according to St. Paul, sin has its seat or even its origin in the material nature of man, *i.e.*, in his bodily life, whereas the spirit, the

principle which has its origin in God, remains untouched by sin. If this were the correct interpretation, St. Paul would come near the Sāṅkhya doctrine, and his teaching might, to a certain extent, be brought into harmony with the Vedānta also. But in reality the apostle is far from entertaining such views. To him all kinds of sin are works of the flesh, even such sins with which the body of man has nothing to do, which belong solely to his mind: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" (Gal. v, 19—21). Here we find side by side with the manifest sins of sensuality, sins which have no connection whatever with the senses, but are of a purely spiritual nature. Moreover the apostle says in 2 Cor. vii, 1: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Holiness, therefore, consists in the putting away of sins which defile both the flesh (*i.e.*, the body) and the spirit. The assumption mentioned above therefore becomes untenable. From another point of view also it will be evident that the apostle cannot suppose the body of man in itself to be the source of sin. For to the apostle, as to the whole Bible, the body is created by God and as such in itself good. But in man, as we know from experience, who is subject to the dominion of sin, the corruption of sin pervades the whole nature, both body and soul. It is this corrupted, sin-pervaded nature, which the apostle calls flesh. In this corrupted nature there dwells nothing good, because sin has dominion in it.

The apostle has in this way characterised sin in all its universal dominion and in all its baneful power: all men, without difference, are sinners, and man is entirely sinful, wherefore all need redemption through the grace of Christ Jesus. The sum and substance of the biblical teaching concerning sin is that the corruption of sin is general and corrupts man's whole nature. God everywhere treats



sin as guilt, for man puts himself in opposition to God's will, and therefore is called to account by Him. As sin in its nature is disobedience and opposition to God's will, and as God cannot come into opposition to Himself, no shadow whatever can fall upon God from the fact of human sinfulness. The testimony of experience and conscience corroborates this biblical doctrine, and it is also in harmony with all sound religious sentiment, for this will always refuse to derive sin and evil from God.

## 2. THE ORIGIN OF SIN AND ORIGINAL SIN.

Now the question arises, how is it that all men are subject to the corruption of sin? And how was it possible for sin to enter God's creation? We have on purpose put off answering these questions. For even if the Bible contained no answer to them, we should have to acknowledge that it is right in its description of the general corruption of sin, and in its solemn condemnation of the same. These are facts which nobody can deny. But in the simplest form the Bible also offers a solution of that problem which again and again forces itself upon the attention of every thinking man. The simple story which gives us an answer to the chief question concerning the origin of sin among men gives at the same time hints with regard to its innermost nature and to the relation between sin and evil.

### THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE OF THE FALL.

We find this remarkable and most lifelike story in the first chapters of the Bible, at the very beginning of the history of mankind. It follows immediately upon the account of creation as given in the Bible (Genesis II, 4—17 and III, 1—19). In considering that narrative we have seen that man came out of the Creator's hand good and perfect, but destined for

further moral development. In his nature there was no moral defect, and he was endowed with all the capabilities necessary for a successful moral development, even to perfection. The fundamental pre-supposition of all morality—the freedom of will—was especially included in the image of God, in which man had been created. Thus Adam, the first man with his wife, lived in a state of innocence, the essence of which consisted in undisturbed fellowship with God. But with the distinction conferred in the image of God, man had also received the moral obligation to use the capabilities given him at his creation, to appropriate the gifts offered him, and thus without interruption to come nearer and nearer to the goal of moral perfection in fellowship with God. To the first man, whose mental life was not made up of abstract thought, this moral obligation presented itself in the form of a concrete commandment or rather a prohibition. In the garden of Eden all sorts of trees were left to the use of man. In connection with them the divine commandment was given, which was to cause man to take the first step on the road to moral perfection: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. ii, 16. 17). Formerly it was assumed that in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and likewise in the tree of life standing significantly near it, all sorts of mysteries or physico-magical or physico-moral potentialities were embodied. The narrative itself contains no such hint. For the purpose intended it was quite sufficient that God had forbidden man to eat of the fruit of the tree. The confidence in, and the love to, his Creator should have been strong enough in the first man to induce him to show simple implicit obedience. This was to have been the first independent step on the road to moral perfection.

But now temptation approached man in the shape of a serpent: “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” (Gen. iii, 1).

This feature also agrees with the state of moral and intellectual childhood. In the narrative it is not said that the serpent was Satan. The first men certainly did not recognise the prince of darkness in it, whom later on in the Bible we are taught to recognise in it. But temptation to sin spoke through the serpent to Adam and Eve. The serpent turns to the latter, the weaker vessel and more easily to be seduced: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" Thus doubt about God's commandment and indirectly also about his justice and kindness was aroused. That the woman responds to the artful question shows that doubt has begun to work in her. If man once begins to reason about such things, he is already lost. First the woman rejects the temptation by repeating the divine commandment. But the serpent replies: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. III, 4. 5). In these words the temptation reveals its character, which is hostile to God and satanic. In the place of fellowship with God and humble obedience to him, it puts proud co-ordination with the Creator and premature desire for a knowledge which has again and again become a snare to man. And the evil spark kindles the fire. The woman looks at the forbidden fruit, she finds it charming to look at and tempting to the taste. She plucks the fruit and gives of it also to her husband, who now joins her in the transgression of the divine commandment. How often has the story of the first sin been repeated since in thousands of temptations! We must, however, keep in mind that the first sin was nothing but the trespassing against a simple commandment of God, suited to the stage of development reached by the first man.

#### THE BEARING OF THE NARRATIVE ON THE ORIGIN OF SIN.

This accounts for the origin of sin among men, but, of course, it is not the final solution of the problem concerning

the origin of evil in general. The Bible throws a veil over this question. Evil did not originate in man, but it presented itself to him from without, and made him fall through his own action. The Bible shows us the black form of the prince of darkness behind the tempting serpent. In him evil had already gained a footing, before its temptation was presented to man through him. This is not the place to enquire how sin arose in the father of lies. As yet a definite answer to this question lies beyond the range of human knowledge. Christianity does not pretend to be a philosophy which is bound to give answers to all the questions that present themselves to the human mind. It offers us practical delivery from the power of evil, not a theoretical solution of the problem of its origin. But this much we may say, that originally also Satan was God's creature, and therefore must have been created as a good spirit. And then he must have fallen away from God by his own choice, so that he became the embodiment of evil and enmity to God. But as regards the first sin of man, we may gather from the narrative that man was *tempted* indeed, but by no means *compelled* to do evil. Temptation awakens in man evil lust, and from his own lust and with the consent of his own free will the evil deed of disobedience springs forth. And so the first sin left its consequences in the nature of man, which could not be removed at once, but which must spread more and more with the human race.

#### THE INNERMOST NATURE OF SIN.

What was the nature of that first evil deed? And what is in general the nature of sin? To say that sin is disobedience to God is not a full answer to the question. We must look for the root from which that disobedience sprang. Some think the evil root is sensual pleasure, which was awakened by the words of the serpent and the sight of the tree with its fruit. There is doubtless something true in this, but it does not touch the real nature of sin. For deeper down than evil lust, and

underlying it, there may be distinguished a more simple and at the same time more spiritual principle, which is at the bottom of every sin as its secret mainspring. Before sensual desire could be awakened by looking at the tempting fruit, the serpent whispered into the ears of the first couple the words, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God." Thus jealousy was imputed to the Creator and thereby the envy of man, or we might say, the self of man was called out against the Self of God. In taking and eating the fruit against the explicit commandment of God, man put his own self in opposition to the divine Self, the person and will of God. He wanted to obtain something for himself which God had withheld from him,—by ill-will, as the tempter insinuated. If, therefore, it is asked what is the innermost nature of sin, we answer, selfishness. Selfishness does not mean that man has a self, *i.e.*, personal self-consciousness, but that in selfish desire his self places itself in opposition to the will and commandment of God, that it tries to assert itself contrary to the will of God; and that is the nature of sin according to the Christian faith. It becomes here as clear as possible, how foolish and wicked it is to take the responsibility for sin from man and to cast it upon God. The free will of man that was misused by himself for the assertion of his selfishness, is the gift of God; but without free will there is no true moral action and no morality at all.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIN IN MAN.

Ungodly selfishness rules the sentiments and imaginations, and also the thoughts, the desires, and volitions of man, at first perhaps in only a half-conscious, and frequently in quite an unreflected, way. In this inner life, it takes the form of evil lust. But as soon as man is able to act, selfishness bursts forth in sinful deeds. These, of course, at first appear one by one, but the more frequently they are committed, the more they bring about a pernicious development of evil, sinful

habits. And habits strike their roots deep into the nature of man, and the more numerous they are and the more firmly they become rooted, the more they create a bad disposition or character whose development, of course, began with the first evil deed, nay with the first selfish feeling. According to the Bible this fatal development can progress even to the last degree of hardening of heart, which admits of no repentance and no deliverance from sin. So long as the sinner can repent, the poet is right, when he says:

From every point of the circle there is a way to the centre;  
And from the farthest error a path leads back to God.

*(Rückert.)*

But if sin is no longer error but hardening of heart in malice and disobedience, then nothing remains "but a certain fearful looking forth of judgement and fierceness of fire, which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebr. x, 27).

#### THE PROPAGATION OF SIN IN ALL MEN.

The narrative of the fall of man also suggests the question how from the first human couple sin was propagated in the whole race, the fact being obvious, that they have all sinned and left the right path. In former times and even in the eighteenth century Christian theologians tried to solve this problem by the assumption that the human soul, before its entrance into earthly existence, existed in the so-called intelligible world of ideas, and that in that intelligible world it fell into sin. This is indeed no solution of the problem, for we cannot tell how that fall took place, and how it takes place again in every soul. With the help of this theory it might perhaps be explained how it is that with the first awakening of self-consciousness evil impulses begin to work and manifest themselves in children. But the intelligible world of ideas and its existence, apart from its manifestation in concrete things, is very doubtful. On the whole this theory of the pre-existence of souls is far too artificial to be true. How

can we seriously imagine that in the generation of a human being a soul always comes down from the intelligible world of ideas to unite with the respective body?

Therefore, this theory has hardly any adherents in our days. On the contrary, many theologians and philosophers are of opinion that sin is not propagated in individual man until after birth, by a kind of social infection. While the young life is developing and unfolding within a society merged in sin, they say, the poison of sin is inhaled by the child together with a sinful atmosphere. In the society of sinful men it receives sin into its mental organism and then sin develops as a morally morbid disposition. It is to be admitted that there is much truth in this theory and that the general prevalence of sin might perhaps be accounted for in this way. But the question is whether this is the only or even the chief way for the propagation of sin among men, and whether this theory does justice to all the facts. The very facts seem absolutely to contradict this theory. We may observe that evil inclinations and passions arise in children, long before they can penetrate into the young hearts from without. In fact, the simile of the spiritual atmosphere has a flaw in it. Social infection through sin does not go on unconsciously, like the process of respiration; and further, does not unconscious selfishness manifest itself in children long before they can see and learn it from their associates? It is quite the same thing with ill-temper and self-will, in which sinful selfishness also manifests itself. Thus we see that sin develops from within and that man receives his sinful disposition with his whole nature as an inheritance from his parents. In proof of this we may also appeal to the conclusion of modern science that man is the product of heredity and environment, which at all events contains a grain of truth. In reality those who hold other theories about the propagation of evil, acknowledge these truths. The teacher who wants to understand the individuality of his pupil looks to his parents, to learn something about the peculiarities of the son from those of his father or mother.

And we are all inclined to trace specially pronounced and peculiar characters back to the peculiarity of the parents. Also good qualities, as modesty, kindness, pity, pass from parents to children at birth. All this leads necessarily to the conclusion that children inherit from their parents with the body their moral nature, and therefore their sinful disposition, their nature as corrupted by sin.

Some have thought it possible to read this whole conception into different passages of the Bible. It is certain that this conception underlies all the biblical statements concerning the subject and frequently seems to be hinted at. The saying: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John III, 6) may certainly be applied to the inborn corruption of human nature, although it may originally have had a somewhat different meaning. The principal passage adduced for this purpose is Rom. v, 12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." St. Augustine, for instance, translates "in whom" instead of "for that", and understands by "whom" the "one man", Adam. In consequence of this St. Augustine was of opinion that all men potentially existed already in Adam and therefore also sinned with him and are born sinners. The descendants of Adam, however, did not exist in their ancestor in such a way as to have been able to sin with him. For this would involve the supposition that they already possessed individuality. Moreover the apostle does not mean to say that all men already sinned in Adam. On the contrary, the rendering of the English version, "For that, *i. e.*, because all sinned" is tolerably correct (Rom. v, 12). Thus this passage does not contain a direct statement with regard to original sin. But certainly underlying the statement there is the idea that men are already born with a sinful disposition, with a natural tendency to evil. The same view is to be found in two Old Testament sayings: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. VIII, 21). "From his youth," because he is born with the corruption of sin. The



same is probably the meaning of Psalm LI, 5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." If thus the Bible, in accordance with science and experience, contains the idea that man brings the inheritance of sin with him at his birth, the assumption of the so-called "original guilt" is a useless and foolish exaggeration of the biblical view. Guilt means culpability, deserving punishment, and the God of justice, who at the same time is much more merciful than dogmatically prejudiced men, does not punish the sinner for a disposition which he received as an inheritance from his parents without a fault of his own. This makes all the difference between the Christian doctrine of sin and its consequences and the conception of recompense in the Indian doctrine of transmigration, that according to the former it is not a blind law, but the holy, righteous will of God which renders to every man according to his works.

### 3. THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN AND EVIL.

It follows from the Christian conception of God and from the Christian notion of sin, that actual sin is connected with guilt, and therefore is subject to the punishment of God. The biblical doctrine of sin has repeatedly drawn our attention to statements of this kind. It must be said generally that, according to the biblical view, all evil is the necessary consequence of sin which has penetrated into the world of men.

#### EVIL THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF SIN.

This is already distinctly stated in the biblical narrative of the Fall of Man. "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. II, 17). Such is the warning which God added to the first commandment given to men. Before his fall man lived in Paradise, that is, in childlike, pious, happy fellowship with God, and there was neither sickness, nor death,

nor any other evil. But from the moment that man transgressed God's commandment he was doomed to death. It is doubtful whether the biblical statement in question presupposes that man was created an immortal being and now became mortal, or whether the idea is that he was indeed created with the possibility of dying and was destined to ripen in fellowship with God for eternal, immortal life, so that for the present death could not approach him. The saying: "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. III, 19) seems to point in the direction of the latter interpretation. The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden seems to have been at least a symbolic representation of the means by which man was to ripen for eternal life, untouched by death, in the fellowship of God. But with the transgression of the divine commandment he actually abandoned this fellowship and thus fell under the dominion and power of death.

As the first consequence of the fall we read: "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. III, 7). This means the loss of that childlike simplicity which is the ornament of innocence. Since the loss of innocence humanity must be ashamed of its nakedness, although the human body is a divine work of art. And then the actual curse of the Creator follows. Man, quite in unison with his simple thoughts and ways, heard the voice of God, who was walking in the garden, in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife concealed themselves among the trees in the garden: "I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself" (Gen. III, 10). Half a confession, half an excuse! By means of excuses Adam and Eve try to shake off their guiltiness, but they cannot prevent themselves from being called to account by God. A special curse is pronounced on Adam, on Eve, and on the serpent, each of which contains at the same time a blessing, that of the serpent becoming a promise for the human race.

For us the punishment pronounced upon the man is of special significance. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in

toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of the life, thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (Gen. III, 17, 18). The earth thus is cursed for the sake of man, who had been appointed its ruler. All evil, all the impediments and drawbacks that are met with by man in surrounding nature, are traced back to this divine curse. The duty, nay the necessity of hard work, is particularly laid upon him: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. III, 19). In the sweat of the face man must work to gain his scanty food from the earth, now, in consequence of the fall, and as a punishment for sin. But like every divine punishment on earth this also may become a blessing, if man submits to it in humble obedience to the will of God. And then it is once more explicitly said that man forthwith is under the law of death, which has dominion in the surrounding world of inferior creatures. The assumption that among animals death was the consequence of human sin would be a misinterpretation of the biblical narrative. As regards man, the words quoted doubtless refer only to bodily death. But afterwards Adam and his wife are expelled from the Garden of Eden, and the entrance to the Tree of Life is barred by a Cherub with a flaming sword, "Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. III, 22). This reaches beyond bodily death. By this man was expelled from direct fellowship with his Creator, the source of all life. Therefore in connection with bodily death man is not only beset with all those evils, which are the harbingers of death, as sickness, infirmity, ailments incidental to old age; but that condition, which the Bible calls the second death, and which we may understand to be spiritual and eternal death, is also in course of development. Man falls a prey to death in its fullest meaning, if salvation does not bring a cure for the disease of sin.

## NOTHING UNREASONABLE IN THE BIBLICAL VIEW.

It is the unanimous testimony of the whole Bible that death thus understood is the wages of sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. v, 12). In proof of this the Bible may confidently appeal to the moral sentiment of natural man, who has always felt the unnaturalness of death and found the cause of it in his sin. The statements of the more ancient Upanishads on the subject of transmigration also bear witness to this. The question concerning the cause of evil and suffering in the world is thus answered in a general way: evil, according to the Christian faith, is the consequence and punishment of sin. Human reason, be it ever so critically disposed, cannot find anything unjust or inconsistent in this. If it is once granted that a holy, righteous God governs the world and that sin is a selfish opposition against His will and His holy ordinances, then His almighty will, which is the law of the universe, must of necessity powerfully re-act against sin, maintain order, and, where it is violated, visit the offender with punishment and suffering. If God did not do this, He would be inconsistent with Himself, which of course is impossible. God does not tolerate sin, but visits it with the recompense due to it.

Only modern pessimists, who have lost the sense of justice and holiness, and trifle with sin, make bitter and blasphemous complaints about "the worst of all worlds", when they see that sin is followed by evil. As if these people could invent a better world! To those who lead a moral life in the honest discharge of their duty, or in the humble service of love, life affords much more satisfaction and true happiness than Schopenhauer and his friends dream of. Their murmurs come from an ugly corner of human life, which fortunately is not known to every one. But Christianity does not deny the existence of evil. The Bible not only

admits its existence, but recognises also the fact that evil does not always fall on the heads of the guilty. According to the Bible, suffering which falls upon the comparatively innocent, is often caused by the sin of others, who apparently go unpunished. Carlyle not only states a fact of experience, but also a biblical truth, when he says: "Evils of all sorts are more or less of kin and do usually go together; especially it is an old truth, that wherever huge physical evil is, there, as the parent and origin of it, has moral evil to a proportionate extent been."<sup>1</sup> Or as the Bible says: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. xiv, 34).

#### THE PROBLEM OF INNOCENT SUFFERING IN THE BIBLE.

In the Bible the question of the distribution of evil and the suffering of the godly appears as a problem, to which a solution is not easily found. In the Old Testament this problem is the subject of the book of Job. The assumption that all suffering is the consequence of the particular guilt of every suffering person, is emphatically denied. Job's friends, who in general advocate this theory, are afterwards severely reproved by God Himself. But the positive solution of the problem is in the book of Job rather dimly foreseen than distinctly stated. Indeed, the truth which rises high above the standpoint of every-day morality, that the sufferings of the godly serve as a test of their godliness, without presupposing particular guilt in them — this truth appears very distinctly in this grand didactic poem. In the prologue (Job I and II), which is written in prose, we may read between the lines, that it is conducive to the glory of God, if the godly man remains true to his God and patiently bears sufferings that are not caused by any particular sin of his own. This is the utmost that could be said in the Old Dispensation con-

<sup>1</sup> *The French Revolution, I.*

cerning this question. In the epilogue (XLII, 7—17), the idea otherwise prevailing among the people of the Old Testament and which doubtless contains a grain of truth, *viz.*, that God's blessing rests upon the righteous and godly and will bring happiness and welfare to them, appears again inasmuch as Job's former prosperity is restored and doubled to him.

In the Psalms also the problem appears. In Psalm LXXIII, the poet in considering the problem why the wicked prosper and the godly suffer, finds comfort in the fellowship of God, which to him is infinitely better than earthly prosperity, and which no earthly misfortune can take from him: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. LXXIII, 23. 24). This confession already breathes the spirit of the New Testament and reminds us of the triumphal song of the apostle: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. VIII, 35).

In the New Testament the connection between sin and evil is occasionally clearly referred to: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," said Jesus to the man to whom he had given health after thirty-eight years of disease. And to the man sick of the palsy he first gives pardon of his sins, before he removes the evil of sickness (John v, 14; Matth. ix, 1—8). On the other hand, Jesus warns us against ascribing particular suffering to particular guilt in the individual. To the question of his disciples concerning the man born blind: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answers with an unmistakable reproof: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John ix, 2. 3). Such evils often grow out of the general sinful condition of the human race, and it would be wrong to infer from them that there must be a particular guilt in those immediately affected by them. These evils exist in order that God's holy work for the salvation of men may

be made manifest. Such was the case here. As a consequence of his bodily evil, and of being healed by Christ, the blind man received also the inward sight of faith in the Son of God. Similarly Jesus says of the illness of his friend Lazarus: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John XI, 4).

The cross of Calvary brings the problem of innocent suffering to its most pointed expression, and at the same time offers the most glorious and satisfactory solution. Here the Son of God, the perfectly innocent one, the embodiment of love, holiness and righteousness, had to suffer in the hardest and bitterest way. And yet he was, and continued to be, the only beloved Son of God, in whom his Heavenly Father was well pleased. And it is in this suffering that, according to the Bible and our own experience, God offers the peace of forgiveness and eternal life to us sinners. In this unique suffering of the only perfectly innocent one, we recognise therefore the perfect revelation of the love of God, so that, if this is once realised by faith, no more doubt concerning it can arise, not even in the greatest adversities of our earthly life. On the contrary, every believer finds in his own experience the assurance, which under the very pressure of outward misfortune gains so much more victorious power: "We know that all things work for good to them that love God" (Rom. VIII, 28. 31. 32). A believing Christian has often to recognise in the evils and sufferings which befall him, the consequence of the sins committed in earlier life. But this suffering has lost its sting, for he knows that it must serve for his own good and for the glory of his Master. And it is the experience of all true Christians that God, indeed, does not always abolish the consequences of sin, but that He always makes them a source of real blessing, if we humbly bow to bear them. In this way it is also possible to bear the consequences of "the sins of the fathers" with courage and patience, whereas an unbelieving world indulges in vain complaints about the misfortunes which befall the comparatively innocent. The solution of the problem

given here is indeed only of a practical nature, but really perfect in its kind, for evil itself belongs altogether to the practical side of human life. It is also a guarantee for the final and complete solution, of which the Christian has perfect assurance. From the purely philosophical point of view no solution of the problem is really possible, of which fact the lamentations of the pessimists bear sufficient testimony.

### THE FINAL PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

The final recompense of sin and the highest revelation of evil according to the Christian faith is reserved for the last judgement at the conclusion of human history. Only then the jarring incongruity between sin and its punishment, godliness and welfare, which in the course of history have proved a stumbling block to many an honest soul, will be adjusted before the eyes of the whole world. All temporal visitations and also most of God's judgements in the course of history have more or less that educative purpose, to lead men to repentance and humble reception of God's salvation. If notwithstanding sin reaches the climax of its development in impenitence and hardness of heart, then there remains nothing but the recompense of God's judgement. Such judgements of holy recompense often occur during a man's earthly life, or in the course of the history of a nation. Universal history, as directed by a righteous and holy God, is doubtless also full of universal judgement to eyes that can see. But not every sin and guilt finds the punishment it deserves in the course of history. Therefore the judgement accomplished in history is not a proof against the coming of the last judgement, but only a distinct announcement of the same. God, who even now judges so unmistakably and awfully, will all the more certainly bring about a final adjustment of accounts.

In the Old and the New Testament the eyes of the men of God are continually directed to this final judgement. The prophets of the Old Testament sometimes solemnly proclaim



the day of the Lord, "which will be great and dreadful, and shall burn as an oven" (Joel II, 1. 2; Mal. iv, 1. 5). But Jesus, who says of himself that he has not come to judge the world, but to save it (John III, 17), with the same assurance bears witness that "on that day" he shall sit on the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them as a shepherd divides his sheep from his goats. He will set the faithful on his right hand, but the unfaithful on the left, consigning the latter to eternal punishment, while the former will enter into eternal life (Matth. xxv, 31—46. Comp. also Matth. vii, 22; xxiv, 30. 31). And on the eve of his death Jesus declares in the most solemn way before his judges that he will come again to judge the world: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matth. xxvi, 64). The clouds of heaven are the throne of the judge of the world. If we are not prepared with Caiaphas to charge Jesus with blasphemy, we must acknowledge that he knew what he said, and had perfect assurance that it will come to pass as he said.

He has also repeatedly and distinctly stated how he will judge. He will reward men according to their works. He recognises the faithful as his own, because in works of love they served him in the least of his brethren. The unfaithful go into the 'eternal fire', because they are lacking the works of love. Accordingly he says in the Gospel of St. John: "The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement" (John v, 28. 29). In this Gospel also, where otherwise faith is so much accentuated, Jesus executes judgement according to the works of men. The apostle Paul, the man who preaches justification *by faith*, says exactly the same thing: "But thou after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God; who will render to every man according to his works: to them

that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of person with God" (Rom. II, 5—11). Here too, there is strict, righteous judgement according to the works of man. For if faith in Jesus Christ does not manifest itself in works of love and in doing good, it is simply of no use.

Finally the revelation of St. John draws a picture of the judgement quite in harmony with the testimonies already quoted: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. xx, 11. 12). The result of the judgement is then stated briefly and concisely: "And if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx, 15). Already Jesus spoke of that place of damnation and torment, where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth, and where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched" (Mark ix, 48). Thus what awaits those that have done evil and not good, is eternal and irrevocable punishment, in describing which Jesus does neither here nor elsewhere play with empty similes. But he has also come to save us men from sin itself and from its awful consequences.



PART IV.

**THE NATURE OF SALVATION:**  
**THE CONCEPTION OF THE CHIEF GOOD.**



## **I. THE CHIEF GOOD IN PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.**

### **1. THE HEAVENLY WORLDS OF THE VEDIC HYMNS.**

The statements concerning sin and evil, contained both in the documents of philosophic Hinduism and in those of Christianity, immediately suggest the question of salvation. From the very beginning they tell us from what evil man must be saved according to the views of these two religions. Salvation in general may be designated as the chief good, both of Hinduism and of Christianity. We here use the term "chief good" in the simple meaning of the term, according to which it designates the highest aim, to which either religion claims to show the way. Every good religion offers a chief good to its adherents. Side by side with the belief in God, the conception of the chief good is the main characteristic of the higher religions; and in connection with the personal or impersonal conception of God the conception of the chief good determines the character of the respective religion. To ascertain the value of philosophic Hinduism and Christianity respectively, the statements concerning the nature of salvation contained in the respective documents are of paramount importance. From them it must appear whether philosophic Hinduism or Christianity is capable of satisfying the deepest wants of the human heart. This also gives the verdict as to the truth or untruth of the respective religions. A religion which presents a subtil nothing to man as his supreme good, which offers him annihilation for salvation, cannot be of God. From God only true salvation and eternal life can come.

Salvation, which as the *summum bonum* forms the most important notion of philosophic Hinduism, is in Sanskrit called *moksha*, or *mukti*,—both words to be derived from the root *much*=to loose, to let free, to release, to liberate. Hence *moksha* or *mukti* means properly “liberation”, “emancipation”, viz. of the soul from earthly existence or the sufferings and evils of transmigration. It is analogous to the biblical term “redemption”, but the whole conception is different. In order to have a term suitable for both religions we use the word “salvation”, which, in the main, covers both the Hindu and the Christian idea.

#### THE IDEA OF LIBERATION FOREIGN TO THE VEDIC HYMNS.

The idea of liberation, like the notion of transmigration and that of the impersonal Brahman, is quite foreign to the Vedic hymns. The Vedic poets, it is true, had a consciousness of sin, but they were far from feeling personal existence as an unbearable evil, liberation from which would be the supreme good. They were quite happy on this earth. What they desired from their gods was rain and fruitful seasons, herds of cattle, numerous offspring, and victory over their enemies in war. They also feared death, and therefore, in their prayers to the gods, they asked to live “fully a hundred autumns”, occasionally also to be delivered from all kinds of disease. How much they wished to see death postponed to a remote future appears very characteristically in the opening verses of the well-known funeral hymn *Rigveda* x, 18:

- 1 Go hence, O Death, pursue thy special pathway,  
apart from that which Gods are wont to travel.  
To thee I say it who hast eyes and hearest :  
Touch not our offspring, injure not our heroes.
- 2 As ye have come effacing Mrityu's footstep,  
to further times prolonging your existence,  
May ye be rich in children and possessions,  
cleansed, purified, and meet for sacrificing.
- 3 Divided from the dead are these, the living :  
now be our calling on the Gods successful :

We have gone forth for dancing and for laughter,  
to further times prolonging our existence.

- 4 Here I erect this rampart for the living;  
let none of those, none other, reach this limit.  
May they survive a hundred lengthened autumns,  
and may they bury Death beneath this mountain.

### HOPE OF A HEAVENLY LIFE IN THE HYMNS.

But at last even these "hundred lengthened autumns" must draw to a close, and death would be sure of his prey. Therefore the Vedic poets also tried to look beyond death and the grave for a better life, not to be followed by death. They hoped to find a new and better life in the kingdom of Yama, the first man that ever trod the path from this life to the life beyond, and who was ruling there in the fields of their blessed ancestors and ancient Rishis. This hope frequently finds expression in the Vedic hymns. We shall quote a few passages showing how the ancient Aryans imagined life in the fields of Yama. In the middle of a hymn extolling the earthly happiness of a pious Aryan we find the following prayer to the gods:

- 11 Neither the right nor left do I distinguish,  
neither the east nor yet the west, Ādityas.  
Simple and guided by your wisdom, Vasus!  
may I attain the light that brings no danger.
- 14 Aditi, Mitra, Varuna, forgive us,  
however we have erred and sinned against you.  
May I obtain the broad light free from peril:  
O Indra, let not during darkness seize us.

*Rigveda II, 27, 11. 14.*

The poet did not think himself capable of finding the road to the light of the world beyond, however much he might look about to the right and the left, backwards and forwards. For this purpose he prays for the guidance of the gods, and is prepared to follow it in simple confidence. To this end he also prays for the remission of his sins. In yonder world he hopes to gain "the broad light free from peril", and finally



the light in which the gods dwell. Doubtless he looks out for the bliss of the heavenly world. But then, of course, the "during darkness" must mean some place of misery, which is mentioned also in other hymns.

The following words, among others, were probably addressed to the deceased in course of the solemnities of the funeral:

- 7 Go forth, go forth upon the ancient pathways  
whereon our sires of old have gone before us.  
There shalt thou look on both the kings enjoying  
their sacred food, god Varuna and Yama.
- 8 Meet Yama, meet the fathers, meet the merit  
of free or ordered acts in highest heaven.  
Leave sin and evil, seek anew thy dwelling,  
and bright with glory wear another body. *Rigveda X, 14, 7. 8.*

Here king Varuna appears united with Yama as the ruler of the heavenly world, where also the fathers live, ready to receive the dead in their circle. It is noteworthy that there the deceased is also to wear another body, and that this body is to be "bright with glory". This shows that it was felt impossible to conceive of a life after death without a body. The word translated by "dwelling" also means "home", and the heavenly world is called so, because the fathers are assembled there.

#### THE HAPPINESS AND JOY OF HEAVEN.

The following verses quoted by Oldenberg contain a description of life in those heavenly fields. The verses are addressed to Soma:

- 7 O Pavamāna, place me in that deathless, undecaying world  
Wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre shines.  
Flow, Indu<sup>1</sup>, flow for Indra's sake.
- 8 Make me immortal in that realm, where dwells the king Vivasvān's son,  
Where is the secret shrine of heaven, where are those waters young  
and fresh.  
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

<sup>1</sup> Meaning "drop", viz. of Soma, in the *Rigveda*.

- 9 Make me immortal in that realm, where they move even as they list,  
In the third sphere of inmost heaven, where lurid worlds are full of light.  
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
- 10 Make me immortal in that realm of eager wish and strong desire,  
The region of the radiant moon, where food and full delight are found.  
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
- 11 Make me immortal in that realm, where happiness and transports, where  
Joys and felicities combine, and longing wishes are fulfilled.  
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake. *Rig. IX, 113, 7—11.*

In these words some scholars find a highly spiritual and ideal conception of life beyond. Life in the fields of light doubtless shines in the brilliant lustre of a certain transfiguration. There is the fulfilment of all desires, bliss and delight, and life is immortal and imperishable. But Oldenberg calls attention to the fact that this bliss is not of a moral character, and that everything "has the character of lazy, transcendental enjoyment". The Soma-drop (*Indu*) flows for Indra while the hymn is being sung, and the whole hymn is in honour of the god Soma. Oldenberg, therefore, is probably right in supposing that those heavenly pleasures are of a very coarse description, carousals and merry-making. In a verse of the Atharvaveda, where "numerous womenfolk" is mentioned, the context suggests pleasures of an even more questionable character (Atharvaveda iv, 34, 2—4). Also the R̥gveda mentions carousals and flute-playing among the pleasures of the world beyond:

- 1 In the Tree clothed with goodly leaves where Yama drinketh with the Gods,  
The Father, Master of the house, tendeth with love our ancient Sires.
- 7 Here is the seat where Yama dwells, that which is called the Home  
[of Gods:  
Here minstrels blow the flute for him: here he is glorified with songs.  
*R̥g. X, 135, 1. 7.*

Compare with this what was said above p. 74 (*R̥g. i, 154, 4—6*) about Viṣṇu's highest foot-print, which doubtless represents one of those heavenly fields of light. There, too, those blissful delights are devoid of the moral element. We must therefore conclude that the Vedic Aryans indeed believed

in a happy life after death, but that they only painted it in livelier colours as a somewhat idealised continuation of earthly life and that they by no means expected moral perfection there.

### UNION WITH INDIVIDUAL GODS.

It was a matter of course that, when the impulse for mystic speculation was once aroused, nobler minds turned away from such visions, to seek satisfaction for the longing of their souls in union with the absolute Brahman, the idea of which had then dawned upon them. Already at a very early date the idea of union with the Godhead is found in Indian literature. At first only union with the personal gods Āditya, Sūrya, and Agni is mentioned in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI, 6, 2, 2. 3; II, 6, 4, 8; III, 10, 11, 6. 7 *etc.*: *sāyujyam salokatām jayati*, "he gains union and dwelling in the same world" with the respective god. Similarly we read in Śatap. Brāhm. XI, 4, 4, 1:

He who sacrifices with a burned offering arrives by Agni as Brahma's door; having arrived by Agni as Brahma's door he attains to union with Brahma and abides in the same world. <sup>1</sup>

Dr. Muir here understands the word Brahman as a masculine, designating the god Brahmā. But it may be just as well a neuter form and mean the absolute Brahman. And we must remember that in those times the idea of the Brahman is still undefined and may mean a person or something impersonal, as is the case with the kindred notion of Purusha, in R̥gveda x, 90. If we keep this in mind, we may consider the above quotations as the connecting links between the hopes for a heavenly world in the Vedic hymns and the idea of immortality in the Brahman-world, as it appears in the speculations of the Upanishads.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Muir. *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V, p. 321.

## 2. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE BRAHMAN-WORLD IN THE UPANISHADS.

### HOPE FOR A LIFE IN HEAVENLY WORLDS.

In the Upanishads the idea of a blissful life in the heavenly world still survives in undiminished vigour. There are constant allusions to those heavenly worlds, and they are brought into relation with the world of the Brahman, where the wise man seeks union with the absolute Self. The Brahman-world thus appears as the climax of bliss of all the heavenly worlds. In the Chhândogya Upanishad the five vital airs (*prāṇa*) are called the gates of heaven. Prāṇa, the rising vital air identified with the eye and the sun, is the eastern gate; Vyāna, the breath going backward identified with the ear and the moon, is the southern gate; Apāna, the descending breath identified with voice and fire, is the western gate; Samāna, the breath of digestion identified with the intellect and with the rain-god Parjanya, is the northern gate; and Udāna, the breath going outward identified with air and ether, is the upper gate, *i.e.*, the gate of heaven leading upwards. It must be borne in mind that the Brahman has its seat also in the heart of man, wherefore these five vital airs are at the same time five gates of the heart and five keepers of those gates, as they are keepers of the heavenly gates. Then it goes on:

These are the five servants of the Brahman, the gatekeepers of the heavenly world. He who knows the five servants of the Brahman, the gatekeepers of the heavenly world, in his family a hero will be born. He who knows the five servants of the Brahman, the gatekeepers of the heavenly world, arrives in the heavenly world. *Chhând. Up. III, 16, 3.*

The author evidently tries to connect the Vedic ideas of the heavenly worlds with the mystic wisdom of the Brahman and to interpret the former according to the latter. In his opinion the heavenly world does not belong to the region of unreal, delusive conceptions, as in the later Vedānta.

In the same Upanishad the three sacred fires in the house of the teacher Satyakāma Jābāla teach his pupil Upakośala Kāmalayana to know the Brahman as the vital air and as ether in the heart: "The man who is seen in the sun, in the moon, and in lightning, that is I, truly, that is I." And then it is three times said:

He who knowing this, meditates on him, destroys the sinful deed, obtains the heavenly world, reaches his full age, and lives long. His descendants do not perish. We serve him in this world and in the other, whosoever knowing this, meditates on him. *Chhānd. Up. IV, 11—13.*

Here the Brahman is distinctly taught. What, however, appears as the last aim is not union with the Brahman, but the attainment of the heavenly worlds, besides some other blessings belonging rather to this world. Life beyond is conceived as quite personal, for the wise man is there to be waited upon by the personified sacrificial fires. It is remarkable that a moral feature also appears here: the sinful deed is abolished, not indeed by sacrifices, but by the knowledge of the Brahman.

The knowledge by means of which those heavenly worlds are obtained, is in the Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad simply called a world-conqueror. The subject of the passage is the singing of certain hymns of praise during the sacrifice, by which the priest may obtain "food" for himself, and the sacrificer, in his turn, may secure the fulfilment of any wishes he may have:

This knowledge indeed is called the conqueror of the worlds. He who thus knows this Sāman, for him there is no fear of his not being admitted to the worlds beyond. *Bṛihadār. Up. I, 3, 28.*

Sāman is the Veda known by this name, and at the same time the hymns taken from it and mentioned in the context. In Bṛihadār. Up. I, 3, 21 this Sāman is identified with the vital air Prāṇa, which is at the same time the Brahman. This accounts for the effects here ascribed to Sāman and to its knowledge. But the highest thing which the author knows, is still the attainment of those worlds, with the continuation of personal existence, and the removal of *alokatā*, that is, unworthiness for those worlds.

In another passage of the same work the number of worlds to be attained is said to be three, and we are also told how we may get admission into each of them:

Then there are indeed three worlds: the world of men, the world of the fathers, and the world of the gods. The world of men is only obtained by a son, not by any other work; the world of the fathers by sacrifices, the world of the gods by knowledge. The world of the gods is really the best of worlds, wherefore knowledge is praised. *Bṛihadār. Up. I, 5, 16.*

According to the later Vedānta what is obtained by knowledge is union with the Brahman. Here the world of the gods is promised to it. To the sages of the Upanishads the idea of union with the Brahman was still more or less identical with the hope of a personal life after death in the heavenly worlds. It is, however, remarkable that three heavenly worlds are distinguished here, three spheres rising one above the other; that of ordinary men, who of course are also fathers to their descendants, that of the fathers, and that of the gods. Evidently the ideas about the world beyond, handed down from Vedic times, are here worked into a kind of system. The top of the pyramid is the world of Brahman.

### THE BRAHMAN-WORLD.

The Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad contains a long Brāhmaṇa (iv, 3), consisting of a detailed description of the Brahman-world. The celebrated sage Yājñavalkya is asked: "Who is the Self?" In his answer he describes the individual Self in the condition of waking consciousness and dreaming sleep, which in the former condition belongs to this world, in the latter to the other. This Self is—

He who surrounded by the vital airs (the senses) consists of knowledge and dwells within the heart, as light, as Purusha. Though he remains the same, he wanders through the two worlds, as if he were meditating, as if he were moving. When he goes to sleep, he rises above this world and all the forms of death. *Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 3, 7.*

We must remember that the individual Self, mentioned here, is at the same time the absolute Self. In reality it always continues to be the absolute Self. But in the waking state

of man it enters into the world of phenomena and appears as the individual Self, which seems to meditate, and to tremble with religious fervour. But in the sleeping condition the Self rises to its own lofty solitude, high above the material world and its chief evil, death, which appears again and again. The third condition, dreamless sleep, and the fourth beyond the latter, are not explicitly mentioned here. But the author really thinks of dreamless sleep, when in the following passage he introduces the condition of dreaming sleep between the condition of waking and that of deep sleep :

There are indeed two conditions of this Self, one for this world and one for the other. The third is an intermediate state, the state of dreaming sleep. When it (the Self) is in that intermediate condition, it sees the two conditions together, the one here in this world and the other in the other world. Now in whatever order it may have got into the condition of the other world, having once gained admission, it sees both, misery and bliss. When it goes to sleep, it takes the material of this whole world, destroys it and builds it up again, thus dreaming by its own illumination, by its own light. Then the Self becomes a self-illuminating light. *Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 3, 9.*

In the dreaming condition the creative power of the Self is at work. It breaks up, as it were, the material world of the waking state, to build a new world of the fragments of the mental pictures of things, in virtue of its own beaming brightness, and that new world has its existence not outside but within the Self. From here it may see both the evils of this and the bliss of the other world, for that world of dreams lies between both. It is made up of the mental pictures, *i. e.*, only in the forms, of the material world. Yet it is not a material world, but a world produced by the Self's own internal creative power, wherefore it is an intellectual world, homogeneous to the Self. Thus, now sinking into sleep, now awakening from sleep, the Self wanders hither and thither between the visible and invisible world of the Brahman. The Upanishad gives a detailed description of these wanderings, how the Self passes from deep sleep (*sushupti*) into dreaming sleep (*svapna*), from the latter into waking consciousness (*jāgrat*), and how then it again returns into deep sleep, which is also called *samprasāda*,

*i.e.*, serene tranquillity. This latter state is the real condition of the Self, the world beyond:

That is really its true form, superior to wishes, free from evil, free from fear... This Self, embraced by the Self, consisting of knowledge, knows no without and no within. That is verily its true form: the wishes are fulfilled, no wish is left, the Self is only its wish, sorrow is gone. *Bṛihad. Up. IV, 3, 21.*

Then follows the well-known description of this state, where all the personal differences between father and mother, thief and murderer, are abolished, whereupon the sage speaks his last word with regard to that Brahman-world beyond:

One only ocean is the seer, without a second. This is the world of the Brahman, O Lord, thus Yājñavalkya taught him. This is its highest aim, this is its highest boon, this is its highest world, this is its highest bliss. The other creatures live upon the smallest particle of its bliss. *Bṛihad. Up. IV, 3, 22.*

The heavenly worlds, the spheres of men, of fathers, and of gods here receive their crown in the form of the Brahman-world. The latter is at the same time described as one undifferentiated ocean, in which there is no room for individual existence. As we shall see, all the streams of existence flow into this ocean. This Brahman-world then is explicitly extolled as the supreme good of this theosophic wisdom, as the highest bliss.

#### IMMORTALITY IN THE BRAHMAN-WORLD.

What then is the nature of this highest bliss of the Brahman-world? The answer to this question is closely connected with the prayer of the Vedic poet, "There lead me to immortality". This is what the sages of the Upanishads long for: deliverance from the power of death. They often exult in the hope that yonder there is no decay and no death. The following passages show how eagerly the sages were longing for immortality:

Only by awakening it is thought to be knowable, only by that immortality may be obtained. Heroic strength is found by the Self; immortality is gained by knowledge. *Kena. Up. VI, 4.*

He who awakens to the knowledge of being the absolute Self has found immortality through the Self. "Heroic strength"



likewise probably means this immortal life, which is imperishable and never grows old. That is also the gift which Nachiketas, the son of a Brāhman, asks of Yama, the god of the realm of the dead, as the second of his famous three wishes:

In the heaven-world there is no fear; thou art not there; no one is afraid of old age. They have escaped hunger and thirst; free from sorrow they are happy in heaven. Thou knowest, O Death, the fire which leads to heaven, tell it to me, for I am full of confidence. In heaven they enjoy immortality: that is what I choose as the second of thy gifts. *Kāth. Up. I, 12.*

In the following passage the idea of liberation is joined with that of immortality, both being included in the Self:

The Self is beyond the non-manifest, pervading all and yet imperceptible. The creature that knows it is liberated, and will attain to immortality. *Kāth. Up. II, 6, 8.*

The creature or being which beyond the non-manifest, *i.e.*, probably behind Prakṛiti, knows the Self, the Spirit, is liberated, *i.e.*, delivered from the round of birth and death. Immortality to those sages means delivery from repeated dying, which includes all the evils of transmigration.

The following passage adds the positive feature, *i.e.*, union with the absolute Self:

When all the wishes that here lie hidden in his heart now cease, then mortal man becomes immortal, and is united with the Brahman itself. When once all the knots that here below are in his heart, are disentangled, then mortal man becomes immortal. Here endeth the pious teaching. *Kāth. Up. II, 6, 14, 15.*

We should be inclined to interpret the "knots of the heart" to mean the doubts and mysteries of human life. But the commentators, who are probably guided by authentic tradition, explain them as ignorance, hatred, passion and the like, that is, metaphysical, moral, and physical evils. If these knots of the heart are disentangled by genuine knowledge of the Brahman, and if with this all earthly wishes and desires are extinguished, mortal man by the dissolution of his individual existence enters into the Brahman and thereby becomes immortal. That is the liberation of the soul.

Union with the Brahman may, of course, be understood in different ways, personal or impersonal, as absorption into

the absolute, or as the self-conscious fellowship of one person with another person. The latter view is by no means beyond the horizon of the Upanishads. In the *Bṛihadār. Upanishad* the personal conception of liberation appears in the midst of an exposition of the Brahma doctrine. It is there declared that the highest Brahman is speech, vital air, sight, hearing, mind, and heart, which is always followed by the same saying:

The heart, truly, O All-ruler, is the highest Brahman. The heart does not leave it, all the creatures come to it; he who possesses this knowledge and worships it, when he has become god, goes to the gods. *Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 1, 2-7.*

Though the Brahman is here described in seemingly monistic terms, the wise man is promised, that "having become a god he shall go to the gods". This is liberation personally conceived, a union of one person with another person. Or must we suspect the author of only having clothed his bolder thoughts in this traditional form? It is more likely that his ideas of liberation were yet undefined, and therefore might be expressed now in these terms and now in others. At any rate other passages of the work give those bolder ideas in quite an undisguised expression:

Brahman truly was this in the beginning. It knew only itself: I am the Brahman. Out of this everything came forth. Whichever of the gods awoke, became this (the Brahman). Thus also among the holy sages and among men. The sage Vāmadeva, while seeing it, knew it: "I was Manu and the sun". Whoever therefore, even to-day, knows this: "I am the Brahman", he becomes all this. Even the gods have no power over his power; he is their own Self. *Bṛihadār. Up. I, 1, 40.*

Here, gods, holy sages and common men become the absolute Brahman, as soon as they awake to the consciousness of their true nature, which is nothing but the Brahman itself. He who knows himself as the Brahman has no need to become Brahman, but he is it already, and therefore he is also the existent in all that exists, the Self, the innermost essence of the gods themselves. This knowledge of identity with the Brahman is liberation.

Nevertheless, the return into the Brahman, or union with it is often mentioned. In the *Maitrāyaṇa Upanishad* a teacher is asked by his pupils, which of the particular gods Agni, Vāyu, Āditya, Kāla, Prāṇa, Anna, Rudra, Viṣṇu, is the best and may be recommended to be worshipped by them. The teacher answers:

These are only the chief manifestations of the highest immortal, bodiless Brahman. Whoever is piously devoted to one of them is here happy in their world. Brahman, truly, is all this; and all those that are but its chief manifestations may be contemplated, worshipped, or rejected. With them it always goes to higher and higher worlds. And when everything is dissolved into nothing, it becomes one with the Self, yea with the Self. *Maitr. Up. IV, 6.*

The personal deities of the Vedic hymns are here subordinated to the one Brahman as its manifestations, and also man is only a somewhat lower manifestation of the Brahman. Man therefore, with the gods and all individual beings, aspires after the Brahman. Only union with the impersonal Brahman makes him imperishable.

In the same *Upanishad* union with the Brahman is distinctly declared to be dissolution into it:

Two Brahmanas are to be meditated upon: the word and the non-word. Through the word alone the non-word is revealed. That is the word Ōm. By moving through it upwards, dissolution into the non-word is attained. This is the aim, this is immortality, this is oneness, this is bliss. As the spider moving upwards on its thread gains free space, even so he who by means of the syllable Ōm moves upwards gains freedom. *VI, 22.*

A famous simile will later on show us how to understand dissolution. What is here called oneness is elsewhere also called "aloneness" (*kevalatā, keivalya*), "wholeness" or "perfection", "oneness with the Supreme":

Greatness can know greatness. Thence one goes to freedom from Self, and in virtue of freedom from Self one ceases to feel joy and sorrow, and gains aloneness (*kevalatā*). *Maitr. Up. VI, 21.*

And now for the famous simile of the streams, which unite in the sea into one undifferentiated whole:

As these streams flowing towards the sea, when they have gained the sea, perish, and their names and forms are dissolved, so that one can speak of the sea only, even so these sixteen parts of the spectator go towards the Self (*puruṣa*),

and having attained the Self, perish in it, so that their names and forms are dissolved. Then one speaks only of that Self which is without parts and immortal. *Praśna Up. VI, 5.*

A similar passage occurs in Mund. Up. iv, 2, 8 :

As rivers streaming fall into the ocean losing their name and form, even so a wise man, giving up name and form, enters the divine, the highest universal Spirit.

As the rivers by flowing into the sea lose their separate existence, so the wise man is united with the Brahman. The wise man merges in the undifferentiated ocean of the Brahman, which here is called the divine Spirit, higher than the high, *i.e.*, the absolute Spirit, the impersonal Godhead. The dissolution of the human personality, the extinction of individual self-consciousness cannot be expressed more distinctly and more emphatically than is done here. The same, though expressed in somewhat different terms, is the meaning of the following simile :

As pure water ever remains the same, when it is poured into pure water, even so it is with the soul of the yogin, when he, O Gautama, possesses knowledge. *Kāth. Up. IV, 15.*

This passage really goes farther than the simile of the rivers. The pious ascetic (*yogin*), who possesses the knowledge of the Brahman, is, even before mixing with it, pure water, like the absolute Brahman itself. He is a part of it. Nothing is needed but re-union. The Upanishad does not say that this re-union is only necessary on account of an inadequate conception. Anyhow, both this and the other passages quoted show clearly that what we are here concerned with is not personal fellowship with a personal God, but rather complete absorption in an impersonal being. The self-consciousness of him that is united with this being must be completely extinguished in the impersonal light of this being.

## IMPERSONAL UNION WITH THE BRAHMAN, THE SUPREME GOOD.

Now union with this being is praised as the sum of all happiness and bliss:

The wise man obtains that which is calm, without old age, without death, without horror, and the highest. *Praśna. Up. V, 7.*

Compare *Śvetāśvat. Up. IV, 14*: Whosoever in the midst of confusion knows the subtlest of all, the multiform creator of the universe, the ever blissful, who alone embraces the universe, he enters into rest which lasts for ever.

This conception of union with the Brahman as the consummation of all bliss appears also in that celebrated prayer, which in a certain sense a Christian might also use:

From the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality. *Bṛihadār. Up. I, 3, 27.*

The following passage may show what high ideas were entertained concerning the degree and measure of that bliss:

If a man is happy and rich, a ruler over others and most abundantly provided with all human enjoyment, that is the highest bliss of men. One hundred of such blisses make one bliss of the fathers who have gained the heavenly world (of the fathers). A hundred blisses of the fathers who have gained their world make one bliss of the Gandharva-world. A hundred blisses of the Gandharva-world make one bliss of the Gods who gained their divinity through merit. A hundred blisses of the Gods by merit make one bliss of the Gods by birth and of a man learned in the Scripture who is without sin and free from desires. A hundred blisses of the Gods by birth make one bliss of the world of Prajāpati and of a learned man, *etc.* A hundred blisses of the world of Prajāpati make one bliss in the world of the Brahman and of a learned man, *etc.* And this is now the highest bliss, this is the Brahman-world. *Chhānd. Up. VIII, 2, 1-10.*

By doing the sum we shall find that the bliss of the Brahman-world is the happiness of a healthy man in royal circumstances multiplied a billion times. This, of course, exceeds all imagination. But in quality this bliss does not differ from earthly happiness. Only occasionally we find an isolated statement to the effect that in the Brahman-world sin is abolished, but it generally must remain uncertain whether the word means "sin" or "evil". Apart from this we find no

moral features of any description. Moral perfection of the individual soul is out of the question, for the simple reason that personal self-consciousness is dissolved in the impersonal Brahman. In every way this bliss is purely negative, *i.e.*, emancipation from the evil of death and transmigration; and the positive feature, union with the Brahman, only serves more distinctly to reveal the negative nature of that *summum bonum*. Bliss without self-consciousness is absolutely unthinkable and a pure self-contradiction. Bliss is a feeling inherent in individuals and pre-supposes self-consciousness. There is no such thing as abstract bliss apart from conscious experience. But we have seen before, in considering the Brahman, that this bliss means only absence of suffering and pain. And the sages of the Upanishads occasionally hint that in reality this bliss and this immortality only mean the final cessation of birth and death. This is quite comprehensible: where personal self-consciousness is dissolved in the impersonal Godhead there can be no return into life and no more death. But as the price for this immortality and bliss is the extinction of self-consciousness it is paid for too highly. It recalls the cures of Dr. Eisenbart, who killed his patients in order to cure them of their infirmities.

### 3. LIBERATION THE SUMMUM BONUM OF THE PHILOSOPHIC SCHOOLS.

The philosophic schools have received the notion of liberation from the Upanishads, and, each in its own way, brought it to its final development. What is the essence of

#### LIBERATION ACCORDING TO THE SĀṆKHYA SCHOOL?

To this question the Sāṅkhya Kārikā, 68 gives the following answer:

When the separation from the body has been attained, matter ceasing to work because it has fulfilled its task, [the soul] obtains both, unconditioned and absolute isolation. <sup>1</sup>

“Unconditioned isolation”, *i.e.*, isolation coming of necessity, and “absolute”, *i.e.*, never ceasing “isolation”—that is the essence of liberation according to the Sāṅkhya doctrine. Isolation, according to the commentator, means simply cessation of pain. Pain is caused by the connection of the soul with matter. The separation of this connection brings the soul into the state of pure solitariness, in which all pain ceases completely and for ever. Pain, which has its seat in ‘the inner organ’, can then no longer throw its dark reflection into the soul. As self-consciousness belongs to ‘the inner organ’, *i.e.*, to matter, self-consciousness is extinguished by the separation of the soul and matter. On account of the atheism of the Sāṅkhya the individual Self is not said to be absorbed into the absolute Self. On the contrary, the individual soul continues for ever in the state of perfect unconsciousness, a condition which practically cannot be distinguished from pure non-existence.

#### LIBERATION ACCORDING TO THE EPIC SĀṆKHYA.

The doctrine of liberation in the epic Sāṅkhya is of special interest. Besides *Moksha* and *Mukti* here the term *Niḥśreyaśa*, “the highest good”, is used, and *Nirvāṇa*, “extinction”. In the Bhagavadgītā as well as in the Mahābhārata the latter term means liberation:

As the waters fall into the sea, which, though filled, continues within its limits, so he only, into whom all desires are withdrawn, obtains tranquillity, but not he who cherishes desires. The man who, giving up all desires, lives without desire, without self-interest, and without selfishness, he obtains tranquillity. This is the condition of Brahman, O son of Pritha. Having attained

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *Der Mondschein der Sāṅkhyawahrheit*, Abhandlung der Münchner Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-Philol. Klasse, XIX, 1892, p. 625.

to this, a man is no more deluded; and if a man continues in this in the hour of death, he obtains extinction in the Brahman. *Bhagavadgītā* II, 70—72.

There can be no doubt that in this passage the *summum bonum* or liberation is described. In v. 72 this aim is called “the condition of the Brahman (*brāhmi sthītiḥ*)”, as far as the latter is attainable in this life. The term means the condition in which the Brahman is, the state of dreamless sleep or the “fourth condition”. Afterwards this is called “extinction in the Brahman (*brahmanirvāṇam*)”, in so far as it cannot be attained to until after death. We take the word *nirvāṇa* in its original meaning, *i.e.*, “extinction”, which is plain from the compound *dīpanirvāṇa*, “the extinction of a lamp”. In v. 28 the same thing is called *moksha*, liberation, and in v. 2 *nirāśreyasa* = *summum bonum*. But here the term is *brahmanirvāṇa*, as will appear from the following passage, which at the same time shows that no higher bliss, no other salvation was known but this *nirvāṇa*:

The yogin, who has his happiness within himself, his joy within himself, his light within himself, having become Brahman, obtains extinction in the Brahman. The wise men whose sins have faded away, whose doubt is destroyed, who, having subdued themselves, rejoice in the welfare of all creatures, they obtain extinction in the Brahman. To the ascetics, who are free from desire and anger, who have subdued their minds and know the Self, extinction in the Brahman is near. *Bhagavadgītā* V, 24—26.

It may be observed that *Nirvāṇa* here appears in closest connection with the Brahman. It is exactly the same notion of liberation which we find in the Upanishads, *i.e.*, absorption into the impersonal Brahman.

The same notion prevails also in the main body of the *Mahābhārata*, especially in Pt. XII (*Śāntiparva*), a few passages of which may be quoted here:

When all pride and folly has been subdued, when he is free from clinging to many things, then the pious man whom light from the true Self enlightens, obtains extinction. *Mahābhār.* XII, 26, 16.

In another passage *Nirvāṇa* is extolled in beautiful words, which do not quite lose their poetic charm even in the translation—*Mahābhār.* XII, 177, 48:



Now having entered into blissful Brahman, I am just as a cool lake in hot summer: I am in peace, in course of being extinguished, and lonely I enjoy most perfect comfort.

Only one who has experience of the oppressive heat of the hot season in India can realise how happy the poet must have felt in union with the Brahman: he feels like a cool, shadowy lake, always, and most of all when the sun shines hottest, rippled by a cool, refreshing breeze. He is in peace, perfectly calm, and in course of being extinguished (*nirvāmi*) in the Brahman. This very extinction in the absolute Brahman is sweet to him. Being separated from all that is perishable, being solitary like the Brahman itself, he now obtains perfect joy and bliss. Thus also in the following passage:

Having by reason given up all the desires of body and mind, a man little by little obtains extinction as a fire whose fuel is consumed.

*Mahābhār. XIV, 19, 12.*

This then is the highest good: extinction, which will come, when all the desires of body and mind, "the will to live" in all its manifestations, is given up.

### NIRVĀṆA IN BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM.

We observe that the notion of Nirvāṇa appears here in organic connection with the individual Self of man and the absolute Self, the Brahman. It is only in this organic connection that the origin of the conception and the description of the delights of Nirvāṇa become comprehensible. Dahlmann<sup>1</sup> shows in detail that Buddhism with the idea of Nirvāṇa also adopted the brilliant descriptions by which this *summum bonum* is extolled in the Mahābhārata. But in the system of Buddhism the Nirvāṇa of the epic Sāṅkhya necessarily became quite a different thing from what it was originally. Buddha's doctrine from the very beginning claimed to be a non-metaphysical doctrine of liberation. It abandoned the doctrine of the Brahman by being absolutely silent about it. It aimed at showing the way to liberation without the belief in that Supreme

<sup>1</sup> *Nirvāṇa*, p. 113 ff.

Being. But with the absolute Self of the Brahman the notion of the individual Self in man lost its significance, for the latter is only the reflection of the former, or according to the doctrine of orthodox Brahmanism both are identical. According to tradition Buddha not only refused to say anything about the nature of the individual soul, but he also flatly denied that there was a Self in man. "Again and again he lets the constituents and elements of existence pass in review and with tiresome accuracy he enumerates the classes into which they may be divided, only to convince his adherents that in whatever way these constituents may be put together and arranged, no Self can be found in them."<sup>1</sup>

But if the absolute Self of the Brahman is ignored and the individual Self in man denied, they cannot be united in Nirvāṇa. In Buddhism this notion has been torn from its maternal soil and therefore lost its original meaning. However brilliantly Buddhist literature may describe the bliss and peace of Nirvāṇa, in connection with this system it means nothing but annihilation. The Buddhist doctrine dissolves the nature of man into five skandhas, *i.e.*, groups: (1) *Rūpā* = form; (2) *Vijñāna* = perception; (3) *Vedana* = sensation; (4) *Samjñā* = imagination; (5) *Samskāra* = impression, mood. We see that there is nothing stable here; they are all activities or impressions from without, which come and go, or formal determinations which have no eternal significance. "With them the existence of man stands and falls." Therefore Buddha declined to say anything concerning the life after death, and he also inculcated upon his disciples the renunciation of knowledge with regard to it. "What was not revealed by me, let that be unrevealed."<sup>2</sup> In death, according to Buddhist doctrine, the skandhas are dissolved like their prototypes, the upādhis of the Sāṅkhya. The extinction of the skandhas is Nirvāṇa. But whereas, according to that system, the true nature of the Self is revealed

<sup>1</sup> Hardy, *Legends and Theories of the Buddhists*, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Dahlmann, *ibid.* p. 15.

and liberation brought about by the dissolution of the upādhis, in Buddhism, after the dissolution of the skandhas, nothing remains. Buddhist Nirvāṇa therefore, in accordance with Buddha's doctrine, is absolute annihilation.

This decides the controversy concerning the nature of Nirvāṇa. Doubtless those are right who contend that the Nirvāṇa of Buddhism is absolute annihilation. This is demanded by the exigencies of the system and by the traditional statements of the Master. But those also who contend that the Nirvāṇa is a positive boon, the bliss of salvation, are not absolutely wrong. For here, too, human nature proved stronger than the theory of the system. The great mass of Buddhists could no more feel satisfied with a supreme good that meant absolute annihilation than with a doctrine of salvation without a God. As Buddha was elevated to the throne of the Godhead, so absolute annihilation became a living, blissful world beyond, for the description of which the documents of orthodox Brahmanism furnished its familiar terms and similes.

Dahlmann is right in calling this Nirvāṇa "out-and-out-Brahmanic and un-Brahmanic". But we may as well say of Buddhist Nirvāṇa that it is not un-Brahmanic, but out-and-out-Brahmanic. Indeed it differs from the Brahma-Nirvāṇa of the great epic and from the liberation of orthodox Brahmanism only in its conception, but not in its nature. On deeper critical examination it comes to the same thing, whether the individual soul is dissolved into an impersonal Godhead in the state of absolute unconsciousness, or whether the essential constituents of man are entirely extinguished. What is "absolute Self" without personal self-consciousness? What does liberation mean which is supposed to consist in the absorption into such a being? Only a mind under the spell of theosophic mysticism can be deluded by poetical phrases with regard to the absolute worthlessness of such a supreme good. Behind those beautiful words there is absolutely nothing worth having. And in the description of this salvation it is gross materialism to assume that the ethereal substance of the Godhead is more

valuable than personal self-consciousness. From an ethical point of view personal self-consciousness is the only valuable and the absolutely fundamental thing in the conception of the Godhead and of man. On this rests the moral freedom and self-determination of God and man. Therefore a *summum bonum* that consists in the extinction of personal self-consciousness is practically not to be distinguished from absolute annihilation. The development of the notion of Nirvāṇa in Buddhism is a conclusive proof that the spirit of man can never be satisfied with a supreme good which consists in the extinction of personal self-consciousness. This is the case with orthodox Brahmanism as well as with Buddhism, with this difference only, that by a different conception of liberation absolute nihilism is somewhat concealed.

#### LIBERATION ACCORDING TO THE LATER SĀṆKHYA AND THE YOGA.

The doctrine of the later Sāṅkhya documents, such as Sāṅkhya Sūtra, *etc.*, does not add anything essential to the notion of *moksha*. Moksha is essentially liberation from the grasp of Prakṛiti and her products, the *upādhis*, by which all the sufferings and miseries of transmigration are put an end to for ever. With regard to the Yoga, in Yoga Sūtra III, 50. 55 liberation is termed *kaivalya* = aloneness. The meaning is as follows:

The dissolution, in the inverse order, of the qualities, bereft of any motive of action for the Self (*Purusha*), is Kaivalya, or it is the establishment of the power of knowledge in its own nature. *Yoga Sūtra IV, 33.*<sup>1</sup>

Thus the constituents of Prakṛiti, by whose movements she accomplishes her work, must return again to the state of equilibrium, so that Prakṛiti ceases to work and the pure Self only remains in its aloneness. Thus the Self has established the power of knowledge in its own nature, *i.e.*, the power of knowing itself in its absolute difference from primordial matter. Here, too, liberation means the extinction of personal self-

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Swāmi Vivekānanda, *Yoga Philosophy*, p. 222.

consciousness; for the latter, according to the psychology of the Sāṅkhya school, which is here employed, belongs to the products of Prakṛiti, and must be dissolved. Then in fact there remains nothing but *kaivalya*, pure aloneness, or solitude, in whose exceedingly thin air we are in danger of losing our breath.

#### LIBERATION ACCORDING TO THE NYĀYA AND VAIŚEŚHIKA.

With regard to the Nyāya doctrine of liberation, Gotama in Nyāya Sūtra I, declares that the attainment of the *summum bonum* (*nirṣreyasādhigama*) is the object of all knowledge. This supreme good, however, is termed *apavarga* = conclusion, liberation. The following answer is given to our question concerning the essence of *apavarga*:

Complete deliverance from this (suffering) is liberation. *Nyāya Sūtra I, 1, 22.*

The preceding Sūtra states what is meant by suffering.

Suffering is that which makes itself felt as pain. *I, 1, 21.*

The commentator observes that suffering here means the whole of individual existence, including the body and the senses, together with their objects, and also pleasure, which is so inseparably connected with suffering. Above all, suffering is transmigration, as the sum of all misery, with all its pains and terrors. Perfect deliverance from all these sufferings, and, as the commentator declares, not only temporary cessation that may come by itself, but final annihilation of all suffering and pain,—that is liberation. The positive side of liberation is not discussed here. This is very characteristic of the Nyāya school. As Buddha could not be induced to say anything definite on the nature of Nirvāṇa, so also, as Professor Windisch<sup>1</sup> observes, according to the views of the Nyāya school nothing positive can be said concerning the nature of liberation. But Kaṇāda, the author of the Vaiśeṣikadarśana, declares:

---

<sup>1</sup> *Abhandlung über das Nyāyabhāṣya*, Leipziger Doktorenverzeichnis von 1888, p. 27.

Where this (*adṛiṣṭa* = destiny) is not, there is no connection (of the bodily organs with suffering), and no revelation of the same, (thus there is) liberation. *V, 2, 18.*

Liberation thus is the cessation of that blind destiny which regulates the births and deaths of transmigration, or deliverance from the round of births and deaths. Thus the well-known family-likeness with the other systems appears here also. Kaṇāda, who is so often ridiculed by Śāṅkara, doubtless like his antagonist, aspired after dissolution into the absolute.

### LIBERATION ACCORDING TO THE VEDĀNTA.

The answer which the Vedānta school gives to our question is much richer. Of course, this most orthodox of all schools receives the doctrine of the Upanishads to its full extent. But the indefiniteness and self-contradictions in the statements of the Upanishads induce Śāṅkara to assume different degrees of liberation, although the latter can, in its nature, be only one. He can do so on account of his distinction of a higher and a lower Brahma-doctrine. Bādarāyaṇa and the other authorities of the school know nothing of such a distinction, which remains the sole property of Śāṅkara. They may, like the Sāṅkhya school, have assumed a state of liberation before, and the attainment of complete liberation only after, death; but they do not mention different degrees of liberation. These have, however, in a certain form become the popular Vedānta tradition. But with regard to the final aim of liberation, Śāṅkara, from both standpoints, fully agrees not only with himself, but also with the other Vedānta authorities.

In his commentary on the Brahma Sūtras Śāṅkara says (I, 1, 4):

This truly real, supreme, eternal existence, pervading everything like air, free from all change, satisfied in itself, indivisible, illuminating itself by its own essence, where there is neither merit nor demerit with their respective effects, reached by no difference of time, even this bodiless existence is called liberation. As the Scripture says, "other than merit, other than demerit, other than cause and effect, other than present and future." (*Kaṭh. Up. I, 2, 14.*)

This authentic definition of the state of liberation applies also to the Brahman without any modification. The Brahman itself in its pure, absolute existence is the state into which the wise man enters by liberation. Or—to put it quite adequately—liberation essentially consists in the knowledge that the individual Self is absolutely identical with the absolute Self, the Brahman. Therefore Śankara says:

*Brahmaivahi muktāvastha*, the Brahman itself is the state of liberation.

But in his description of liberation, Śankara cannot keep on this esoteric standpoint, but involuntarily speaks again and again from the standpoint of the exoteric. He finds the union of the sage with the Brahman described in Chhāndogya Upanishad VIII, 12, 1—3:

Truly, O giver, this body is mortal and always a prey to death. It is the abode of that immortal Self. But the Self connected with the body is held by pleasure and pain. For while it dwells in the body it cannot get rid of pleasure and pain. But when it is free from the body, it is no longer affected by pleasure and pain (1). The wind is bodiless, also a cloud, lightning, and thunder are bodiless. Now as these, arising from this heavenly space, and approaching the highest light, appear in their own form (2), thus also this calmly serene Self, arising out of the body, and approaching the highest light, appears in its own form. That is the highest spirit. There he wanders about, laughing, playing, rejoicing with women, carriages, and relatives, not remembering the body with which he was united (3).

By the manifestation of the soul in its own form, as it is described here, Śankara declares, nothing new is added to it; only the former state, its union with the body, ceases, as sickness ceases, when a man recovers. Blindness, weeping, and decay disappear with the body, and the soul appears in its true nature as the Brahman itself. The light to which it rises is the one in which the Brahman shines. Śankara bases this on the following beautiful passage:

Him under whom the year with its days rolls on its paths in constant cycle, him the gods adore as the light of lights, as immortality. Him in whom five and five the races rest, in whom space is firmly founded; him I think as my own Self, I who, immortal, know him, the immortal, as Brahman. *Bṛihad. Up. IV, 4, 16. 17.*

"The highest light" thus means the Brahman itself, and at the same time the true essence of the individual Self, which is identical with the Brahman. The union of both is the essence of liberation, as Śankara says in *Ātmabodha*:

When the false vestures of the body fall, the sage enters completely into the Godhead, as water is united with water, air with air, and fire with fire (52).

But how can it be said that the individual Self is united with the absolute Self, if, according to a fundamental doctrine of the Vedānta, both are identical, and that the conception of their difference is only a false delusion of Avidyā? Śankara replies to this objection with a familiar simile:

Though the Self is always present, it is lost, as it were, by ignorance; when this passes away it appears as if it were found, like an ornament on a person's own neck. *Ātmabodha* 43.

The simile is of a girl wearing her jewels round her neck, who in her confusion forgets that she has them on her neck, and thinks she has lost them. She looks everywhere and cannot find them, until her hand happens to touch her neck, and she finds the jewels again. It is the same with the awakening of the consciousness of the absolute unity between the individual and the absolute Self. Or with another well-known simile:

As a trunk is imagined to be a man by delusion, so the Brahman is believed to be the individual soul; but when once the true nature of the soul is seen in it, then it will return into the Brahman. *Ātmabodha* 44.

If in the night a man sees a bush or the trunk of a tree, he may mistake it for a thief or a robber. But if seen in broad daylight, it turns out to be a bush or a trunk. The thing has not changed, but true knowledge has taken the place of that false conception. Thus for liberation, no change in the nature of the soul is required, but only the true knowledge of its identity with the absolute Self, so that the soul, which is the absolute Self, no longer thinks itself to be different from it. This knowledge is itself liberation. Whosoever has it, is already united with the Brahman.



Śankara now applies all the attributes of the Brahman without exception to the sage who has obtained this knowledge. He possesses the right view (*samyagdarśana*) which in reality is knowledge of his own Self (*ātmabodha*). By this, the *upādhis*, of which the body consists, and which as delusive vestures veil the true nature of the Self, are dissolved and disappear altogether. For this sage there is neither sacrifice nor austerity, no pleasure, no pain, and no fear. For him there remains only the experience that he is the Brahman:

The fruit of knowledge consists in direct experience. For the Scripture (*Bṛihadār. Up.*) says: "The visible, not the invisible Brahman", and the saying (*Chhând. Up. VI, 8, 7*), "That art thou" denotes a thing already existing, and must not be understood to mean, "That thou shalt be after death". Therefore the knowing man possesses the absolute consummation of liberation. Nothing evil now clings to the sage, for there is no difference between good and evil in the Brahman.

In proof of this Śankara quotes *Chhând. Up. iv, 14, 3*:

As no water sticks to the leaf of the lotus flower, so the sinful deed does not stick to him who knows this.

Thus it is possible for the sage to do evil, but the consequences of the evil do not fall upon him. And further:

As the reed burns if thrown into the fire, all the sins of him who knows this are burned. In the sage who knows himself as the Brahman, the fire itself burns and consumes the sinful deeds of the past and present.

It is a matter of course, as Śankara points out with great prolixity, that the effects not only of the evil but also of the good works cease. For they, too, would render liberation a very doubtful thing for the sage. In order to enjoy the fruits of good works he must continue to be born and to die. A scriptural proof is also forthcoming:

The Self is a wall, a boundary line, that these worlds may not be confounded. Neither day nor night, nor old age, death, and pain, nor good deeds, nor evil deeds overstep that wall. All sins retreat before it; for that Brahman-world is free from sins. *Chhând. Up. VIII, 4, 1*.

But the sage has passed that wall; he is united with the Brahman. Deussen calls this union *Unio Mystica*. But

here we are not concerned with the personal fellowship of two individuals, as the union of the believer with Christ, but rather with the absorption of the sage in the impersonal Brahman, by which his self-consciousness is extinguished.

### LIBERATED IN THIS LIFE.

In the passages quoted it is emphasised that this union takes place with the rise of true knowledge, even in this bodily life. Therefore in the *Vedāntasāra* 34<sup>1</sup> the wise man on this stage is called "liberated in this life (*jīvanmukta*)":

The liberated but still living is he who by knowing the impartite Brahman, which is his own essence (a result brought about) by the removal of the Ignorance enveloping it, perceives it clearly as the Impartite and his own essence; and, in consequence of the removal of Ignorance and its effects, such as accumulated works, doubt, and error, remains intent on Brahman freed from all fetters. As it is said in the Śruti (*Muṇḍaka Upanishad II, 2, 8*): "When that which is supreme and not supreme is seen, the fetter of the heart is burst, all doubts are removed and works fade away."

But the term *jīvanmukta* again reveals a self-contradiction, in which the system gets entangled. Śāṅkara declares that with the awaking of true knowledge the Upādhis are dissolved. We should, therefore, expect that, speaking exoterically, the wise man should now die, or that the body should be dissolved somehow, in order that the liberated Self might be united with the absolute Self. The term *jīvanmukta* shows that such is not the case. No argument whatever will avail here to get rid either of the body or of death, both are affirmed by the term *jīvanmukta* and they remain hard facts, even for the most consistent Vedāntist. How does the Vedānta get out of this dilemma so fatal to the whole system? Śāṅkara says, life continues, because there is still a remainder of the fruits of works done in the present life to be recompensed. As the potter's wheel continues to revolve, even after the vessel has been shaped, so, Śāṅkara says, life continues after

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Jacob, *The Vedānta Sāra* translated.

the beginning of liberation, for the latter is no reason for stopping the rotation.<sup>1</sup> That is concealing the difficulty with a simile. Why is there in liberation no reason for the immediate cessation of this bodily life by absolute union with the Brahman? It was said above: "All his works disappear", as soon as a man sees the Brahman in himself. Śankara himself feels this weak point, wherefore he adds another simile:

An eye-sick man, even after having been healed and having long since learned that there is only one moon, yet for a while will see two moons, by the power of the impression, or by the habit of his visual nerves.

In the same way, Śankara says, the impressions of the material world, to which bodily life belongs, continues even after the knowledge of its delusion, and, by that, liberation has been obtained. But death is not an event which comes as imperceptibly and gradually as the cessation of double-sight after a successful operation. Śankara is aware of this, and therefore he puts a stop to all further objections by the triumphant declaration:

This is no subject for dispute. For how could a man who in the conviction of his heart knows himself to be Brahman, though he is still in the body, be refuted by another? <sup>2</sup>

But with this declaration neither the body nor death are disposed of. Nor is it of any avail if Deussen exclaims: "Truly, venerable, holy words!" In reality, for any one with some proficiency in abstract thinking it is very easy indeed, if he wishes, to conceive the Brahman and to identify himself with it in his thoughts. The question is whether true realities correspond to these thoughts. Śankara declines to give proofs. He must have felt that in fact there are none. The Brahman itself and union with it either in the body or after death, is simply a fiction, for which there can be no proof, and the system which Śankara takes so much pains to build up, crumbles to pieces before our eyes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> Deussen, *ibid.* p. 460.

This appears also in what Śāṅkara has to say further on. He cannot shut his eyes to the fact that in the Upanishads the Brahman-world is promised not only to the wise, but also to the pious, "who in the woods practice faith and austerities" (Chhāṇḍ. Up. v, 10, 1), or "practice faith and truth in the woods" (Bṛihadār. Up. vi, 2, 15). "He leads them into the Brahman-worlds." There they dwell "in the remotest region; no return threatens them". They are on the path of the gods, *i. e.*, by performing the ceremonies prescribed by the Veda, to reach the highest goal. This statement is opposed to Śāṅkara's idealistic view that the way to liberation consists only in the knowledge of the Brahman. Being neither able to give these statements a different interpretation, nor to deny the authority of the Upanishads, he finds the following expedient. There is, he says, besides perfect liberation, corresponding to the doctrine of the higher, unconditioned Brahman, also a lower, gradual liberation (*kramamukti*), which, corresponding to the doctrine of the lower, conditioned Brahman, leads to union with the latter. Whereas that highest liberation, also called *Sāyujya*, union, and *Brahmalaya*, dissolution in the Brahman, is only obtainable through right knowledge (*saṃyagdarsana*), the performance of religious ceremonies (*ūpāsana*) is sufficient to obtain gradual liberation. Of course, the authors of the Upanishads thought of no such thing. To them there was only one union with the Brahman, to which however in their opinion there were more ways than one. It is also to be observed that, according to Śāṅkara, those pious men who worship the Brahman in the form of a symbol, as heaven, sun, and the like, do not reach the Brahman-world, *i. e.*, do not even obtain gradual liberation, but must be content with an earthly, perishable reward, because that worship of symbols does not lead to the knowledge of the Self.<sup>1</sup> On the authority of Bādarāyaṇa, Śāṅkara allows those pious men who worship only personal gods according to the Vedic ritual and without symbols, to

<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *ibid.* p. 473.

reach the lower Brahman by the path of the gods. In their consciousness they are still doers of works and the Vedic ordinances still exist for them as a law. From that consciousness the fruit of works results, which must be recompensed; and for the observation of the Vedic ordinances the glory of the Brahman-world (*aiśvarya*) and deliverance from evil await them as their reward.

### THE HEAVENLY GLORY OF THE PIOUS.

In what then does that heavenly glory of the pious consist? The term *aiśvarya* is derived from *Īśvara*, the name of the first personification of the Brahman. *Aiśvarya* therefore means the glory and bliss of the highest personal gods. According to Śankara the pious man finds this glory in the "fulfilment of all wishes", in accordance with Chhānd. Up. VIII, 2, 1 — 9. Let him wish for the world of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, friends, of sweet smells and garlands of flowers, of eating and drinking, of song and music, and finally that of women — his mere wish is sufficient to bring these things to him or him to them:

Whatever aim he may aspire to, whatever wish he may cherish, — through his mere desire it comes and in its possession he is satisfied.

Śankara lays stress on the fact that this is an easy way to satisfy our desires, and that it lasts as long as the desire exists. In this state the pious man is really free; he can move as he likes and is dependent on no other master, for he can have no wish for that, or else that wish would also be fulfilled like all other wishes. The Vedānta philosopher has no doubt, that here the pious man still possesses the central organ of perception (*manas*) and therefore to a certain degree belongs to the material world; for that organ is also the seat of wishes, which, as we have seen, the pious man still cherishes in that world.

But the Vedānta schoolmen are at variance with each other concerning the question as to whether he continues to possess a body. One of them denies it, and another

asserts it on account of Chhānd. Up. vii, 26, 2: "He is simple, he becomes threefold." This triplication, they say, is only possible, if there is a bodily existence. Bādarāyaṇa solves the difficulty by assuming that the pious man who has entered into glory, as he gets all his wishes fulfilled, can, at his will, now assume a body, and now again assume a purely spiritual condition. The scripture, he says, teaches both. But that scripture passage supposes not only one body, but three, and up to a thousand for one and the same spirit. Do all these serve as a residence for the pious man who has obtained liberation, or are they partly inanimate, like wooden puppets moved by a mechanism? Śāṅkara answers that, as a light can divide itself (he probably means, may be reflected from several sheets of water), so a glorified Spirit may inhabit several bodies at once, in proof of which assumption Śāṅkara adduces stories of yogins performing certain feats of jugglery. It would have been better for him to consider the scripture passage about that multiplication in its context; he would then have seen that it in no way refers to the pious man in glory, but that it describes the self-multiplication of the Self by the process of creation.

But *aīśvarya* does not mean only the glory of wealth, but also the glory of dominion. According to Śāṅkara the dominion of the pious man in glory is unrestricted, with the sole exception of the government of the universe, for the latter belongs only to the Supreme Īśvara, and, in the nature of things, cannot be exercised by many, but only by one. That means, however, that the unrestricted dominion of the pious in glory is really very much restricted, and that they are dependent on the Supreme Īśvara. Śāṅkara finds this doctrine in a verse of the Puruṣa Sūkta, Rīg. x, 90, 3 (see above p. 86). Here, he says, two forms of the Supreme Self are distinguished, one here below, the other in the world above. The former is mutable, the latter immutable. Because the man who is merely pious can with his knowledge attain only to the former, he obtains only lower, gradual liberation.

According to popular tradition the latter consists of the following three inferior grades: (1) *Sālokya*, dwelling in the same world with the respective personal god; (2) *Sāmīpya*, dwelling near such a god; (3) *Sārūpya*, obtaining the form of such a god and therefore likeness to him. Superior to these, as the highest, perfect degree, is (4) *Sāyujya*, union with the Brahman. The three inferior degrees are frequently identified with the heavenly worlds of the Vedic hymns and the *Purāṇa* literature, and explicitly stated to be only temporary dwelling-places. When his merit is consumed, the pious man must leave them in order to begin the round of births again.

Also according to Śāṅkara the glory of the pious man in heaven is transitory. As it belongs only to the lower Brahman it cannot be eternal. And yet apart from other passages quoted before, it is said in *Chhāṇḍ. Up.* iv, 15, 6:

This is the path of the gods, the path to the Brahman; those who on this path get there, do not return into the turmoil of human life; they do not return.

Śāṅkara thinks that this passage speaks of the lower Brahman and its world. But at the end of an æon, when everything returns into the Brahman, the lower Brahman also must pass away like all created things. Within that time, Śāṅkara says, the pious in the Brahman-world will have acquired that true knowledge which leads to liberation, and thus have made themselves capable of absorption in the absolute Brahman. With the lower Brahman, *i.e.*, *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the pious then enter into the one impartite, absolute Brahman, as it is said in the verse of a *Smṛiti* unknown to us:

When the whole universe returns into the Brahman,  
and the dominion of the Supreme Lord is ended,  
Then all the pious, purified in spirit,  
will go with him into that blissful dwelling.

"The Supreme Lord" or "God" is here the lower Brahman. His dominion, together with his individual existence, ends with the respective æon; and with the pious, who partook of his glory in the Brahman-world, and then, by knowledge of the

highest Brahman, became "purified in spirit", he is absorbed in the highest Brahman, which is here called the "most blissful" or "highest place". Thus Śankara knows how to make the *summum bonum* of perfect liberation attainable also to those pious people that here below did not attain to the knowledge of the highest Brahman.

Naturally it will be asked, Of what use is all this laborious dogmatic subtilty, if the exoteric view, with which we are concerned here, is a delusion of ignorance? Why are all these delusive conceptions taken so seriously? From Śankara's proper point of view the only consistent thing would be to declare that all this, being a false and delusive conception, must be entirely thrown aside. But the statements of the Upanishads stand in the way. And besides, we may here find a concession to the realist point of view, from which Śankara can no more emancipate himself than from the authority of the Vedas. But in making this involuntary concession of the real existence of the world and the individual souls he denies his higher standpoint, and the whole system of Vedānta monism crumbles to pieces, and thereby bears witness to the reality of the created world and the untenability of the doctrine of the absolute Brahman.

On the other hand the doctrine of liberation is here developed even to its most extreme consequences, and the attempt made to bring it into harmony with the statements of the Veda. No later teacher of Vedānta monism, least of all Swāmi Vivekānanda, has added anything of importance to Śankara's doctrine. Even Śankara's antagonists of a more dualist, or as we should say, theistic tendency, speak of union with the Godhead in terms by which the extinction of personal self-consciousness is only imperfectly veiled. The great mass of those who reflect on such things strictly adhere to Śankara's doctrine of absolute absorption into the absolute Brahman. If teachers like Rāmānuja, Madhvāchārya, Udayanāchārya, and Chaitanya ever attempted to give the idea of liberation a somewhat personal form, Śankara has made room for such



teachers in the world of the lower Brahman, but only in order to let them finally merge into the great ocean of the infinite Brahman. We may therefore say that liberation, according to Śankara's doctrine, is the generally acknowledged *summum bonum* of Hinduism.

#### LIBERATION EXAMINED.

We have already pointed out that this *summum bonum* differs only in expression and in conception, but not in its real essence, from the Buddhist *Nirvāṇa*, i.e., extinction or annihilation. In proof of this we may adduce the testimony of the Hindus themselves. The author has often asked Hindus, young and old, what they mean by "liberation (*moksha*)" and the invariable answer was, annihilation. The sacred books of Hinduism likewise testify that liberation means extinction of personal self-consciousness, the dissolution of the individual soul into the impersonal absolute Brahman. It is impossible to see how this is to be distinguished from the extinction or annihilation of *Nirvāṇa*. The evils and sufferings of human life are then, indeed, entirely abolished. But bliss and peace, divine life and moral perfection are equally impossible where personal self-consciousness ceases. Besides, this "liberation" cannot afford the people of India a basis for the regeneration of their religious, moral, and social life. The annihilation of personal existence, which is the real essence of this liberation, contains no motive whatever for moral action; on the contrary, good works must cease, when the wise man has accomplished his union with the Brahman in thought. Solitary, separated from the life of the world, he is only to live for the tranquillity of his soul in continual meditation on the Brahman. Such an ideal will never breed men of moral activity for the regeneration of social life and the general elevation of the people. It flatly forbids such things. For even to those who have not obtained the full knowledge of the Brahman, not only evil but also good actions are harmful; they involve fresh births and there-

fore an endless prolongation of the sufferings and pains of transmigration, and prevent the attainment of liberation. Here every moral action must give way to the acquisition of that wisdom which, in its essence, is liberation.

Nor is the liberation of the Vedānta in any way a desirable boon. It is not only absolutely worthless: a morally healthy man will shudder at the thought that his personality is to be annihilated. To this Tennyson gives powerful expression in one of the cantos of his "*In Memoriam*":

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remersing in the general Soul,  
Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside:  
And I shall know him when we meet.

In reality the Indian idea of the *summum bonum* is the outcome of despair. The conception of sin was dissolved into that of evil, and this again was, in the doctrine of transmigration, exaggerated beyond measure. As the conception of a personal God had been dissolved into the idea of the impersonal Brahman, there was absolutely no more refuge, no more escape from the dreadful evil of transmigration, except the dissolution of personal, self-conscious existence in the Brahman; for that evil would cling to all personal existence.

Thus error gave birth to fresh error, which ended in despair, and could finally only find rest in annihilation. This idea of annihilation, however, is a serious blot on the notion of the Godhead; or in other words, it proves that the Vedānta conception of the Godhead must be an absolute error. A Supreme Being which must annihilate its highest creatures in order to deliver them from evil, cannot be the true God. The true, living God has other means and ways to deliver men from sin and evil. His gift is not annihilation, but eternal life in personal fellowship with Him. The heart of

man, the whole nature of man, hungers and thirsts for eternal salvation and eternal life.

Hinduism in its idea of liberation also bears witness to this. However much we must deplore the error of the Indian mind in its conception of the nature of salvation, we must acknowledge, and joyfully do acknowledge, the want, the longing itself, from which arose the earnest efforts for liberation on the part of the sages of ancient India. In the heart of a Christian sympathetic chords will vibrate as he reads the eloquent strain in which this yearning for union with God has found expression in the ancient literature of India. Man needs salvation!—That is what those ancient documents preach with a thousand voices. This need is not extinct even in our own days, and it will in the future powerfully stir all deeper minds and pervade the life of all nations, be they civilised or uncivilised.

And further the ancient Indian sages express a great truth, when they say that liberation or salvation is only to be found in the union of man with God. Man once for all is created for God, and his heart remains restless within him until he finds rest in union with God. In giving expression to this great twofold want of the human soul, the Indian mind proves the truth of that old saying, "*Anima humana naturaliter Christiana*", the human soul is in its nature pre-disposed to Christianity. And Christianity, which rests on the revelation of the living God, possesses the proper means to perfectly satisfy that great want of the human heart.

## II. THE HIGHEST GOOD OF CHRISTIANITY.

### 1. ITS PRELIMINARY STAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The highest good of Christianity may be said to be the liberation of the human soul. Usually, however, the highest boon of Christianity is called the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Heaven. Thus Jesus begins his public work with the call: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel" (Mark I, 15). The kingdom of God is the subject of all his preaching and especially of his parables; and the apostle in summing up the substance of Christianity, says: "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. xiv, 17). But the kingdom of God is a real liberation or salvation for our souls. Whosoever enters the kingdom of God and partakes of it, is thereby delivered from the greatest evil, which is sin; and the consummation of the kingdom of God, as it proceeds, brings full deliverance from all evil. This agrees generally and formally with the conception of liberation in Hinduism.

When Jesus Christ came forward with the gospel of the kingdom of God (Luke iv, 43), it was not necessary for him to explain to his disciples or his people what the kingdom of God was. The name and the thing was well-known to them from the Old Testament. The Jewish nation of that time had at least learned this lesson from the writings of their prophets, that they should wait for the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God was to them the sum and substance of all salvation and of all blessings, the supreme good which God would give His people through the promised Messiah. If, therefore, we

wish to know what the kingdom of God, as brought and proclaimed by Jesus, is, we must first turn to the Old Testament. Here, in the Old Testament, it was not only promised in prophetic words, but it was prefigured in those relations into which, according to the testimony of those ancient writings, God had entered with the people of Israel. Let us first see what the nature of those relations was.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEGINNING WITH ABRAHAM.

According to the testimony of the Old Testament the relations between God and His people begin with their ancestor Abraham: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—such is the message which God again and again sent to His people (Exod. III, 6. 15. 16; VI, 2 *etc.*). We may simply say that Abraham's history marks the beginning of the kingdom of God on earth. When God called him from out of the nations which were then sinking into idolatry and polytheism, he was told: "I will make of thee a great nation . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. XII, 1—3). In obeying God's call Abraham received God's promised blessing. God entered into relations with him which involved special protection, provision, and fellowship with Him. For if God bestows His blessing, it is never confined to things external and temporary only. His entering into relations with man, in some way or other, always involves relations of inward, spiritual fellowship. It is very remarkable that the divine promise given to Abraham from the very beginning lays stress on the fact that the blessing of divine fellowship is not to be confined to Abraham and his offspring, but that all the nations of the earth shall through his instrumentality partake of it. The strict isolation of Abraham has for its purpose the salvation of the whole world.

The particular relation into which God entered with Abraham is afterwards called a covenant, and at the same time another essential feature of this relation is brought to

light: "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly" (Gen. xvii, 1. 2). The word "covenant" implies a personal fellowship between God and Abraham. And for all future time it is called "the covenant of God with the fathers". This covenant lays but one duty on Abraham: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." It becomes the man with whom God has entered into relations of particular fellowship, that he should walk in the presence of God, where there is no room for sin, and that he should be perfect, *i.e.*, that he should manifest his godliness in a righteous and blameless life according to the will of God. So these relations of the patriarch with God are from the beginning of an absolutely moral nature. Not only is the obligation of a moral life connected with them, but the impulse and strength for such a life are given in Abraham's fellowship with God.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ISRAEL.

On the basis of that covenant God again entered into relations with the people which in Egypt had grown out of Abraham's family. This new covenant was introduced by the historical fact of the deliverance from Egypt, which has been engraven for ever in the consciousness of Israel as the fundamental act of God's salvation: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii, 7. 8). Thus this new revelation of God to Israel means deliverance or salvation. At first it was deliverance from the deep external misery of oppression and slavery. At the same time it was also intended

as a deliverance from the snares of growing idolatry and the corruption of godlessness, to which Israel would have fallen a prey in Egypt. This salvation of God is an historical fact, which even the most destructive criticism cannot shake. The Bible itself designates it as that deed of God on which God's covenant with Israel rested.

The nature of this covenant is, in a passage of the "Book of the Covenant", acknowledged to be of great antiquity by extreme critical scholars, described as follows: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. xix, 4 — 6). These are God's own words to Israel in which the nature of God's covenant with Israel is described. Here the idea and the name of the "kingdom" of God appears for the first time. Israel as a nation is to be to God "a kingdom of priests". Every man in this nation is to occupy a priestly position, so as to have free access to God, in holy service of Him who is the head of that kingdom. But in order to do so, the people must have a priestly character; they must be a holy people, separated from all that is unholy, above all from sin, and consecrated to God. This will be accomplished, if the people harken to the voice of God, *i.e.*, obey the will of God revealed to them, and thus keep God's covenant. That is what the covenant of God with His people means. By it Israel is made God's special property and is in fellowship with Him. But this divine boon involves also serious obligations, above all that of obedience to the will of God, and of holiness in thought, word, and deed.

The whole religion of Israel and their social and political institutions rest on this covenant. Their sacrificial rites, especially their atoning sacrifices, are intended for no other purpose than the sustentation of this covenant by restoring Israel's holiness whenever it was violated. The tabernacle,

and later on the temple, was a visible symbol of this fellowship of God with His people. Therefore the former, the prototype of the temple, was called "the tent of meeting", *viz.*, of the meeting of God with His people. In the 'Holy of Holies', where no image of God was ever tolerated, on the 'Mercy Seat' over the Ark, God's presence rested, invisible to the people. The 'Holy of Holies' by its cubical form, the symbol of perfection, outwardly represented God's presence among His people. But this symbol was itself never an object of worship.

The political constitution of this people also rests on God's covenant with them. Jehovah Himself was their king, no matter whether prophets like Moses, priests like Eli, or kings like Saul and David had temporary dominion. They could only rule as commissioned by Him and as His representatives. Therefore it is said in the song of Moses: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever" (Exod. xv, 18), and the Psalmist sings:

The Lord hath established His throne in the heavens,  
And His kingdom ruleth over all.

Ps. CIII, 19.

And to Israel, in so far as they kept God's covenant and His commandments, the assurance was given that God, their invisible king, would be ever ready to help them, and that they would never utterly perish. Thus the Kingdom of God in Israel constitutes a *summum bonum*, given by God and involving high moral duties and obligations; a boon which, indeed, was at first confined to this life, but which notwithstanding was of a divine and spiritual nature, which guaranteed the development into an eternal, transcendental salvation of a moral nature.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE.

It is a peculiarity of the Old Testament religion, to which there is nothing equal in other religions, that its best representatives, at the time of its highest development, are in no way satisfied with the present state of things, but look



for the consummation of their religion in the future. Of course, it is not possible here to consider the prophecies of the Old Testament, even in their principal features. But one or two of the most important promises concerning a new covenant may be quoted. Thus we read in the prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi, 31 — 34).

A new covenant is, according to this prophecy, to take the place of the old covenant, that was made at the time of the exodus out of Egypt. And then the essentially new nature of that covenant is emphasised. Whereas under the old covenant the law of God remained outside of and foreign to man, the distinguishing feature of the new covenant is to be the spiritualisation, the inward appropriation of the divine will, so that the moral life of the people, sound in its roots, may grow healthily from within. The reason for this can only be found in the new perfect knowledge of God, which is likewise brought about by the new covenant, and shall comprise all the members of the covenant, and fully permeate every one of them. This knowledge of God rests on the intimate personal fellowship of God with His people: "They shall be my people, and I shall be their God." And this fellowship again is more intimate and more lasting than that of the old covenant, be-

cause its great obstacle will be removed by the remission of the sin and iniquity of the people. Thus this new fellowship of God with His people is absolutely inward, spiritual, and moral in its nature, wherefore it is a boon of the highest value and of everlasting duration, eternal as God Himself. There is nothing better for man than full, perfect fellowship with the living God. Compare also Ezekiel xxxvi, 24. 25 and Joel iii, 1—5, according to which passages it is God's own Spirit which will fit His people for a new life according to God's holy will.

In the writings of the prophets this gift of God is connected with the advent of a person, through whom all the future gifts and blessings will be brought to God's people: "For thus saith the Lord God: Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out . . . and I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd" (Ezek. xxxi, 11. 23). It is evident from Jerem. xxiii, 5. 6 that "my servant David" here means the "Branch" promised to the house of David: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord is our Righteousness" (Is. ix, 6. 7; xi, 1—10). The new covenant founded by this king is the kingdom of God. The high moral nature of this kingdom is suggested by the name of the king: "The Lord is our Righteousness." Righteousness, *i. e.*, moral perfection, comes as a gift from God and becomes the property of men. Where God himself has become the source of moral power and life for man, there the kingdom of God has become a reality which can no more be disturbed, or destroyed.

The kingdom of God, as foreshadowed in the Old Testament and in perfect development promised for the future, is thus sufficiently characterised. It is always a moral good, connected

with moral obligations and imparting moral impulses and powers. Even in prophecy this kingdom of God reaches a degree of moral perfection which does not belong to this world, but is transcendental, spiritual, and eternal as God Himself. Even in prophecy it is evident that this kingdom of God is essentially life in fellowship with the living, holy God, on the basis of perfect forgiveness of sin. It is salvation in the fullest meaning of the term.

## **2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE PREACHING OF JESUS.**

Jesus began his public work by announcing that the kingdom of God was near at hand. By this he designates himself as the promised Messiah who is to bring in this kingdom with its abundance of blessings. "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" — he declares in the synagogue of Nazareth, after having read to his hearers the promise Isaiah LXI, 1 (Luke IV, 18. 19. 21). By this he also declares that the kingdom of God which has come in him, is the promised "acceptable year of the Lord", which brings deliverance to all that are miserable in the captivity of sin, and the promised great salvation of God.

### **THE KINGDOM OF GOD A PRESENT SALVATION.**

Only occasionally, but therefore so much the more characteristically, we learn something more concerning the nature of that kingdom. Thus in the beginning of the "Sermon on the Mount": "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure

in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matth. v, 3—10).

These beatitudes are included in the promise of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is here called the kingdom of heaven, in the first place, because it came in and with Jesus from heaven, from God's invisible world; but also, because it is not perfectly realised in this aeon, for it will not be perfectly revealed until heaven and earth are united into a new dwelling of God among men. But it belongs already to the poor in spirit, to those who feel their want of fellowship with the living God and of His life. All the other gifts that are mentioned here are only special features of the all-comprising gift of God's kingdom. This kingdom, therefore, is the highest and most perfect blessing offered to men through and in Jesus. There, in the kingdom of God, the poor in spirit become rich in divine life. There they who mourn over their sinful corruption are comforted by the forgiveness of their sins. There they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, after an inward and outward life in harmony with the divine will and pleasing to God, are satisfied, because the kingdom of God includes the gift of righteousness and strength for a life in accordance with the will of God. The members of the kingdom are children of God, who are in close, personal communion with their Father and therefore do not lack any blessing. Not only the far future will bring all those gifts; the kingdom of heaven is already here in Jesus. Whosoever joins him in faith, as a member of this kingdom, becomes at once a partaker of its bountiful blessings.

Jesus declares this in a word which belongs to the most beautiful of his sayings: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: yea Father: for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no man

knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither doth any man know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matth. xi, 25—30). That which God has hidden from the wise and prudent, who are proud of their philosophy and their knowledge of divine things, and has revealed to the babes who in the humble consciousness of their ignorance are open to the light of divine revelation in Jesus, is the secret of the kingdom of God. That is here present in Jesus: for everything belonging to the kingdom of God and its realisation on earth is entrusted to him by his Father. But this is only the consequence of the unique relations between God and Jesus, His son, in virtue of which only the Father fully knows the innermost nature of Jesus; and only Jesus, the Son, is capable of knowing the Father in all His glory and love, and of delivering this knowledge to men. This is the foundation of the kingdom of God lying in the mysterious depths of the personality of Jesus Christ: he represents in his person the real and, at the same time, personal fellowship of God with men. In virtue of his unique relation to God and his position of authority in the kingdom of God that follows from it, Jesus now calls all them that are labouring and heavy laden to himself to give them rest. Toiling and weary they have become in struggling for righteousness and the favour of God, hoping, as they do, by their efforts to obtain entrance into the kingdom of God. But instead of that they are and feel heavy laden with the burden of their sin and guilt. Then Jesus calls to himself, into the kingdom of God. The rest which he offers them begins in the remission of their sins, the first gift connected with the kingdom of God.

But the highest good of the kingdom of God includes also a very serious obligation. He who wishes to obtain and to

enjoy that highest good must take the yoke of Jesus upon himself and learn from him. As he himself in meek suffering and humble service fulfils the will of his heavenly Father, so they who, by joining him, have become partakers of the blessings of the kingdom of God, must in humble obedience learn to fulfil the will of God, which is really and fully revealed in Jesus Christ. As obedience to God's will in the fulfilment of his work is the secret food of Jesus himself (John iv, 34), so also the members of the kingdom will in the practice of this obedience find and preserve rest for their souls. To them it is an easy yoke and a light burden, because in the kingdom of God they have found the impulse and the strength for the accomplishment of their work. Thus here, too, the kingdom of God is at the same time the highest blessing and involves the highest moral obligation. It is the same in the Sermon on the Mount. For after having described the blessedness of the members and the gifts of salvation in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus calls upon its subjects to let their light shine before men and to glorify their Father in heaven.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD THE CHIEF GOOD.

In several parables Jesus sets forth the kingdom of God as the highest good: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure in a field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matth. XIII, 44 — 46). Here, in this connection, we need only to emphasise the feature common to both the parables, *i. e.*, that the kingdom of God is a thing highly desirable, a treasure of high value, a pearl of great price, so that the man who finds it and can recognise its value, gives everything he possesses for it. In other words: the kingdom of God is the supreme good.

## THE FUTURE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The kingdom of God is offered to man as a present blessing. But Jesus himself did not expect that the kingdom which was come in him, would develop and reach its consummation quietly and without reverses. He is conscious of two events of decisive importance lying between his present work and the full revelation of God's kingdom. These events are his suffering and death followed by his resurrection, and his coming again for the last judgement. Later on we shall have to consider the significance of the former event for the kingdom of God. It is the latter, his coming again for the last judgement, which will bring about the full development and reveal the eternal glory of the kingdom of God. The tares, which in the field of the kingdom of God on earth are mixed up with the wheat, will be separated from it and thrown into the eternal fire of judgement. But on the other hand the inward glory of the kingdom will then be revealed publicly: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matth. XIII, 34—43). This is the final consummation of the kingdom of God, not to be followed by any relapse to a lower stage of development. The same feature appears in the parable of the sheep and the goats. Only after separating the sheep from the goats the Son of man, who is the judge of the world, says to those on his right hand: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And these righteous will then enter "into life eternal" (Matth. xxv, 34—46). The kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world, since the creation of men, in the secret of whose hearts its blessings have been enjoyed; but only now is it fully disclosed and made manifest for the final admission of those found righteous by the judge. The kingdom of heaven is even now a real and present boon, but its perfect and final consummation belongs to the future.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

Also what St. John has preserved for us in somewhat different words of Jesus agrees in its principal features with what we found here in his preaching: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life" (John v, 24). The promise or rather the offer of eternal life in this Gospel takes the place of the invitation to the kingdom of God. This is a difference of terms which by no means involves a contradiction in matter. As appears from Matth. xxv, 34, compared with verse 46 and Luke x, 25, both the terms, "the kingdom of God" and "eternal life", mean one and the same thing for Jesus as well as for the people. Such terms, which Jesus adopted from popular phraseology, receive, of course, in his mouth an entirely new meaning. According to his teaching, life eternal is involved in the kingdom of God. The term "eternal life" in the Gospel of St. John must therefore not be supposed to mean eternal life after death. It is on the contrary a present gift, which God bestows through Jesus to him who believes on him. Whosoever believes in him has thereby received eternal life in the fellowship of Jesus as a present experience.

Therefore Jesus, in whom the kingdom of God is come, could say: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me, shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John vi, 35). As in Matth. v, 6, so it is promised here also, that the hunger and thirst for eternal life will be satisfied in fellowship with Jesus, *i.e.*, in the kingdom of God, by the present gift of eternal life. But here also the consummation of eternal life is yet to come: "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi, 40. Compare John v, 28. 29). Similarly Jesus says in John xiv, 2. 3: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you;



for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." His Father's house is the kingdom of God, now hidden with God in the invisible world. It has many mansions, which afford room for all. The entrance is prepared by Christ going to the Father in his suffering and death. He will return in glory to take them to himself and make them partakers of his glory. Therefore he says in his last prayer: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" (John xvii, 24). To see the glory of Jesus Christ, according to a well-known Hebrew mode of expression, means, to partake of that glory. Here, too, eternal life, the most important of the blessings contained in the kingdom of God, is a present boon, which may be experienced even now, but will only be fully revealed, when Jesus comes again to judge the world and to consummate his kingdom.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD A MORAL BOON.

We have already had occasion to observe that the kingdom of God, as a personal union between God and men, is an essentially moral boon. The first gift of the kingdom of God is forgiveness of sins, and that is followed by the gift of righteousness. But it is remarkable that Jesus lays particular stress on the moral nature of this blessing. He demands from the members of the kingdom the fulfilment of the whole of God's law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matth. v, 17). The fact that the prophets are mentioned here, who interpreted and enforced the law according to its moral substance, shows that Jesus means the moral substance of the law. He fulfils this will of God as made known in the law and the prophets, both by his own obedience, and by laying upon his disciples the duty and giving them the strength to

live in obedience to it. In this sense he requires from those who want to enter the kingdom of heaven a better and more perfect righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who spoke highly of the letter, but transgressed the spirit and substance of the law (Matth. v, 20). Jesus, on the contrary, demands absolute obedience to the divine will: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven" (Matth. vii, 21).

The will of God is most concisely expressed in the highest commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto it is this—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matth. xxii, 37—40). This love to God, which Jesus inculcates here, is indeed a matter of course to the members of the kingdom, who have become children of God. But this love to God existing in the heart and mind must manifest itself in practical love to our neighbour, who has become, or is to become, a fellow-member of the kingdom of heaven. How Jesus understands the exercise of that love we see partly in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x, 25—37), partly also in that of the last judgement, where he considers the ministering to the poor, the sick, and the miserable as being done to himself (Matth. xxv, 31—46). That is the fulfilment of the will of God, without which nobody can enter the kingdom of God. This ministering love is inseparably connected with the possession of the kingdom of God; but if the supreme good of that kingdom is really experienced by man, love to God and to our neighbour springs forth from it quite naturally and spontaneously.

This love to God and our neighbour is directly the opposite of the selfishness of the natural mind, which we have recognised as the innermost nature of sin. Therefore, unlike the Indian sages, who proclaim annihilation of self-consciousness, Jesus

demands the denial of our own self, which is bound up with sin, and that means death to selfishness: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matth. xvi, 24. 25. Mark viii, 34. 35. John xii, 24—26). Whosoever will come after Christ, *i. e.*, become his disciple and enter the kingdom of God, must deny himself. At his very entrance into the kingdom of God he must, as it were, condemn his sinful self as having no right to exist. This is the condemnation of selfishness in principle pronounced once for all. But afterwards it is necessary in following Jesus to carry out this condemnation every day and hour. The practice of love to our neighbour, if of the right kind, is a constant death to our own selfishness. The cross, the suffering laid upon the disciples of Jesus in his service, which they must take upon themselves in humble obedience, is also conducive to the destruction of selfishness, and borne in humble obedience is nothing but life to true love. Therefore the disciple of Jesus is to enter the kingdom of God in his master's footsteps by daily mortifying his own sinful self in works of love, and by patiently bearing the sufferings sent by God.

Thus Jesus preaches the kingdom of God as the supreme good, as the salvation of God, in which all the other blessings are included, and with which also the highest moral obligation, *i. e.*, love to God and our neighbour, which includes self-denial and all other moral duties, is bound up. It is a gift of God, offered in the person of Jesus Christ to be received and experienced during this life as eternal, divine life in fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, but which will also reach its outward, glorious consummation, when he comes again to judge the world. It is not a mere "cheque on the future"; on the contrary, the present experience of its blessings involves the full assurance of its glorious consummation in the future. Neither does it belong to this world only to perish and pass

away with it, but it belongs to the true world of God and is eternal as God Himself. It is not the extinction of personal self-consciousness in an impersonal Godhead, but everlasting life in the personal fellowship of God with His children, who are partakers of His kingdom.

### **3. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST IN THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.**

No careful reader of the Bible will fail to observe that in the epistles of the apostles the idea of the kingdom of God is very much in the background. There are only occasional allusions to the "kingdom", and the expression occurs only once or twice in Paul's epistles. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv, 50. Compare 1 Cor. vi, 9. 10. Rom. xiv, 17). But the thing itself, fellowship with God and the blessed life in it, is the very substance of the epistles. The apostles stood in living experience of that supreme good, and they had been called to bear witness to it. And now, when they write to their congregations, they cannot but bear witness to this life, or, which comes to the same thing, to the risen Christ. For, according to their testimony, their fellowship with God is the outcome of their fellowship with the crucified, risen, and glorified Christ. We may, therefore, say that in their testimony fellowship with the risen Christ takes the same place as the kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus. Indeed the kingdom of God is practically nothing but fellowship with God through Christ. The only difference is that in the preaching of Jesus this fellowship is with Jesus visibly present in the body, and in the writings of the apostles it is with Christ risen and glorified.

## ST. PAUL'S TEACHING.

To begin with the testimony of the apostle Paul. In Romans v, 1. 2 we read: "Therefore, being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The apostle describes here the believer's present enjoyment of salvation. In this description appear the essential features of that supreme good which in the preaching of Jesus is called the kingdom of God. The believers are justified by faith and have received forgiveness of sin; they have peace with God, are reconciled to Him for blessed fellowship with Him; they have received access to the grace of God, so that He is well pleased with them, and they have fellowship with Him; and finally, they rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which is included in the experience of their present salvation. This glory of God is the glory to be revealed at the consummation of all things, and therefore the same thing which, in considering the preaching of Jesus, we called the glorious manifestation of the kingdom of God when Jesus comes again. All this has been given to believers through Jesus Christ, who to the apostle is always the crucified and risen Saviour.

Similarly we read in the same chapter: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v, 10). The apostle knows that he and all believers are reconciled to God through the death of His Son, *i. e.*, united in personal fellowship with Him; likewise he knows that he is in possession of the divine life of the risen Christ with whom he has fellowship. In virtue of this life he is also sure of salvation in the realised kingdom of God. For "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi, 23)—a gift which is at once present and future. Because this life of the risen Christ is in the believer

and Christ is in living fellowship with him, he may say: "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii, 20). This divine life is planted in the believers through the Spirit of God and Christ: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. viii, 9. 10). Through the Spirit then Christ dwells in his believers, and that is the divine life they possess, their highest good.

Nor is the idea of being the children of God wanting in St. Paul's testimony. It is the Spirit that brings divine life into the believers and preserves it in them: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." For "the Spirit himself beareth witness to our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him" (Rom. viii, 14—17. Compare Gal. iv, 4—7). Here again the very real idea of the kingdom of God appears: the inheritance belonging to the children of God, the full possession of which they will obtain in the glory to come, is the kingdom of God. Here too it is a present and at the same time a future boon, the highest good which the apostle can mention.

The same thing appears in yet another form in the epistles of the apostle Paul. He looks upon the church as the body of Christ, of which the individual believers are the members, and Christ himself the head: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit . . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. xii, 12. 13. 27). This is a fundamental idea of the apostle, which appears in almost all his epistles, not a mere simile, occasionally used. Thus

he teaches that by faith in the crucified and risen Christ believers are really united with him into one living organism, which may be compared to the human body. The bond which holds this organism together is the divine life of the glorified Head. The act by which the individual believer is made a member of this organism, is baptism, by which it is signified that the sinful nature is consigned to death and buried with Christ, in order to rise with Christ into new life, which is both a divine gift and a human obligation. This inward, spiritual reality is outwardly represented in baptism according to the original rite, the immersion of the believer being symbolical of his dying and being buried, and his emersion from the water being symbolical of his resurrection with Christ (Rom. vi, 4). The organism thus created and filled with the Spirit of Christ constitutes exactly the same thing that in the preaching of Christ is called the kingdom of God; but here, corresponding to the historical development, it appears in a more finished form. It is fellowship with God through Christ.

But as yet this organism with its life is hidden within the believers: "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." But because it is life with the risen Christ, it will one day, when he comes again, manifest itself also outwardly and in glory: "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Col. III, 3. 4. Compare Phil. III, 20). From the great chapter on the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv), we see how great an importance St. Paul attaches to this consummation. On the basis of Christ's resurrection St. Paul here vindicates the resurrection of the believers against doubts and objections and shows its great importance. In the resurrection of the believers he sees the consummation of the kingdom of God: "Then cometh the end, when he (Christ) shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all (hostile) rule and all (hostile) authority and power . . . , that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv, 24—28). Then the triumphal song of the redeemed will be heard: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where

is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. xv, 54. 55). Death thus involves no difficulty whatever to the believer who has received eternal life in fellowship with God, as Jesus says: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John xi, 25). Whether the body is first dissolved into dust or whether the believer still lives in the flesh at the advent of Christ, — in any case, he is sure that he has received divine life in fellowship with the risen Christ; that that life will also one day be outwardly manifested in a new body, in full harmony with the divine life which he has received; and that that body shall then share the eternal glory of Christ and God.

St. Paul also lays stress upon the moral nature of this supreme good. In the epistle to the Romans he devotes a whole chapter to the exposition of this truth: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi, 1—7). He not only emphasizes that the believer ought not to do so, but that in virtue of his fellowship with Christ he cannot. The new life in holiness and righteousness pleasing to God, the fulfilment of the divine will, are for the believer not only the highest duty, but also an inborn necessity of his life. St. Paul indeed warns his readers (v. 13): "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." But he says also (v. 14): "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace"—and (v. 18): "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." The apostle thus neither makes the moral work of the Christian a process of nature, of which man might be an idle spectator, nor does he make it a mere obligation which man must fulfil by his own strength. To him it is the working out of a gift of divine life, including both obligation and strength for the work. The result he calls the fruit of the Spirit in the believer's life: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v, 22. 23). Truly a most beautiful



moral ideal, which moreover has the merit of having stood the practical test in the life of all true Christians: the kingdom of God or fellowship with God being the rich, fertile soil; faith the root; divine life the nutritious sap; the daily life of the Christian the tree which bears these glorious fruits.

#### THE TEACHING OF ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN.

The rest of the epistles do not go so much into detail, but they speak no less distinctly and vividly on this subject. We shall only quote a few passages from those of St. Peter and St. John. St. Peter, at the beginning of his first epistle, thanks the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter i, 3—5). A hope, which at the same time is life, has been begotten in the apostle through the resurrection of his crucified Lord. It was a birth into a new life. This hope has reference to an inheritance reserved in heaven, which does not belong to corruptibility, is not defiled by a moral stain, and will never lose its divine freshness of life. What else can that be but the kingdom of God, supernatural and containing divine and ever fresh life? It has not yet been revealed. But in the last time, when the risen Christ appears again in glory, this inheritance will be revealed unto salvation, *i.e.*, the great deliverance from sin and evil in the everlasting kingdom of God. As all this has already been granted to believers as a living experience and a lively hope sure to be fulfilled, the apostle can assure them that the kingdom of God, that was foreshadowed and prepared in Israel, was realised in them: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people for God's own possession;

that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter II, 9).

St. Peter also lays stress on the moral nature of the kingdom of God. Christians are to make known to the world the virtues, that is, the moral excellencies that manifest themselves in God's saving work, His love and grace, His righteousness and holiness; which can only be brought about by a holy life before God and practice of love to our neighbours. As the apostle says in the same epistle: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently" (1 Peter I, 22). And later on: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behaviour seemly among the gentiles: that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter II, 11, 12). Christians are sojourners and pilgrims in this world, for the home to which they are proceeding belongs as yet to the invisible world. Therefore it becomes them to abstain from fleshly lusts in their manifold forms, and to let their conversation be seemly among the nations, that their brightly shining light may show them the way to the kingdom of God (compare Matth. v, 16). Thus the duty of and the impulse for a life in obedience to God's will here grows out of the supreme good, the kingdom of God.

Finally, St. John, the beloved disciple, bears witness to the word of life: "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and declare unto you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John I, 2. 3). The apostle knows that he is in fellowship with Christ, the life that has come in person from the Father, and at the same time in fellowship with the Father, and in the possession of

eternal, *i. e.*, divine life. And he declares to his readers that they too may become partakers of this blessing, which is nothing but the kingdom of God having become a personal experience. According to the purely moral conception of God, which St. John expresses so beautifully, this boon is of an absolutely moral nature: "This then is the message, which we have heard of him, and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John I, 5—7). As God is light, that is, absolute moral perfection, so it does not become those who profess to live in fellowship with Him, to walk in the darkness of sin; on the contrary, life in the light, in holiness and love, is natural and obligatory to them. And the blood of Christ is given by God as the means of getting rid of sin.

Thus also to St. John, fellowship with God and divine life given with it, *i. e.*, the kingdom of God, is a present experience of the highest moral value. But its full manifestation is reserved for the future: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is" (1 John III, 2). Just as in the preaching of Christ and in the testimony of St. Paul the condition of believers in Christ here is, that they are children of God, which is an essential feature of the kingdom of God. But this supreme good will not be revealed fully until the second advent of Christ, when those that belong to him will see him in his heavenly glory, and his glory will be manifested in them. Then it will appear also in outward glory what it means to be children of God. And here again St. John emphasizes the moral nature of this highest good: "And every man that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John III, 3). What the apostle of love means by this

purification is self-evident: the removal of hatred and the practice of love, "not in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth" (1 John III, 18). To him also the new life growing out of the fellowship with God and Christ consists in holiness and in the practice of love.

#### THE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE REVELATION.

To the testimony of the apostles concerning the *summum bonum* of Christianity we add the beautiful description of the consummated kingdom of God, as it is prophetically seen by John: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away. And he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. XXI, 1—5).

In beautiful pictures, to which however divine realities correspond, the New Testament prophet here describes the consummation of the kingdom of God, which he explicitly designates as the final realisation of that which was begun and foreshadowed in the old covenant. It is the archetype of the Old Testament tabernacle, the place of meeting for God and His redeemed, sanctified people. The former heaven and the former earth have passed away. A new order of things has come in their place, in which a new heaven and a new earth are united to make one glorious, perfect dwelling-place of God among men. The essence of this consummated kingdom of

God, therefore, is the union of God with men in blessed personal fellowship, which is also outwardly manifested in glory, so that this new dwelling-place of God shines as if adorned for a marriage feast; and death, together with all the pains and sorrows connected with it, is abolished for ever. Sin, the cause of death and all evil, is also abolished; not indeed because human and divine personality and self-consciousness are dissolved in an impersonal ocean of light; but because sin is forgiven by God and overcome in His strength, and the love of God now has dominion in all. Moral perfection and essentially moral glory predominate everywhere in this picture and find also a perfectly adequate outward manifestation.

#### COMPARISON OF HINDU LIBERATION AND CHRISTIAN SALVATION.

This is the supreme good of Christianity: delivery from all sin and evil, and personal fellowship with personal God in everlasting bliss and glory. Whereas the Indian *summum bonum* of liberation is really absolute annihilation or absorption in an impersonal, unconscious entity, the highest good of Christianity is salvation resulting in eternal life and eternal beatitude in a perfect personal and conscious existence. Supposing these two ideals really existed, and liberation as described in the sacred books of India were a true reality in the same way as the kingdom of God of the Bible,—which of the two would be the more valuable? Which would more fully satisfy the wants of the human soul? Could it be that liberation which, in order to abolish the evil of transmigration, causes the personal self-consciousness of the individual soul to be extinguished and dissolved in an entity which has no personal self-consciousness, but, on the contrary, is in a condition beyond dreamless sleep, *i. e.*, absolutely unconscious? Or is it not rather that supreme good of the kingdom of God, in which sin and evil are abolished and man's personal, self-conscious spirit is redeemed, saved, purified and brought to moral per-

fection, endowed with a glorified body adequate to its nature, and united in everlasting, blessed fellowship with the true, personal, living God?

We do not hesitate to assume that it was this supreme good which the ancient Indian sages really longed and sought for, impelled by the deeply felt wants of their souls. But they could only seek and postulate; and finally they missed the goal. But now their spiritual heirs, at least those modern Hindus, who hunger and thirst after righteousness and fellowship with God, should find no difficulty in making their choice between the two forms of salvation that are here laid before them. What is the use of this earthly life of ours, if it is to end in the extinction of our self-conscious personality? What is the good of our fighting against all that is evil, of struggling for the realisation of that which is good; what is the use of all moral effort, if we are to be extinguished as a fire whose fuel is consumed? On the other hand, what a glorious hope, what a powerful comfort is there in the assurance that this moral struggle shall even here below go from victory to victory, and shall be adorned with the crown of the moral perfection of an everlasting personality! The salvation of the individual, the salvation of India, the salvation of all humanity lies only in this supreme good. It will be a happy hour for India, when one day the educated among her sons will seek that highest boon, recognise its absolute value, and with humble desire for salvation and real love of truth gratefully accept this all-embracing gift of God.

Not till then, but then most assuredly, the many festering wounds, from which the people of India are suffering, will heal. It is true that Christian nations also suffer from such wounds. But those wounds were always most numerous and dangerous, when the great mass of the people had turned away from the kingdom of God. And it is an historical fact that whenever Christian nations return to Christ and his salvation, the wounds in the body of the nation at once begin to heal. Such is the case now. Among the nations of the present time the English,

the Germans, and the Americans are doubtless those which in their national life are healthiest, most vigorous, and most powerful. Japan as yet is only their pupil, docile and clever though she may be. In those countries the Gospel of the salvation given by God through Christ has free scope, and their princes and statesmen have repeatedly borne witness to the fact that their greatness rests on the Christian faith; whereas those nations that have shut their doors to the Gospel of the kingdom of God in Christ show signs of decay. These facts are an historic testimony to the absolute value of the supreme good of Christianity, which surpasses everything else, not least the 'liberation' that is set forth in the sacred books of India.

But we may also claim that the kingdom of God is the only true salvation, and may be known and experienced as such by every one who is willing. The liberation taught by Hinduism falls with the notion of the Brahman. And we believe that we have shown that an impersonal Godhead is really no Godhead at all. But then *mukti* and *brahmanirvāṇa* are meaningless. No wonder then that a nation which for hundreds and thousands of years has been absorbed in this *summum bonum* that amounts to annihilation, is suffering from hopeless national torpor. He who runs after a shadow wastes his best strength in vain. We have shown that before death this *summum bonum* may be conceived in thought, but not reached and experienced in reality. What it will be after death is not accessible to present experience. Liberation, according to Hindu views, therefore, cannot be tested by experience. With the kingdom of God it is quite different. True Christians have real experience of this highest good every day of their life. They know with absolute certainty that in having this experience they do not live upon the products of their own imagination or of their own thoughts. For even those who have neither thoughts nor a productive imagination of their own, have the same experience of fellowship with God. We know that we have received this gift from above and that

we should never be able to produce it in ourselves by means of our own intellect, of our knowledge and thought, or of our own moral powers. With the kingdom of God we have received forgiveness of our sins, sanctification of will, thought, and feelings, and divine life instead of our moral death. We do not boast of this boon in vain self-complacency, but we bear witness to it in humble gratitude to God. The testimony of Christ and his apostles as well as the manifest testimony of history agrees with our personal experience. He who does not shut his heart against truth, but with an open mind reads the testimony of the New Testament, cannot but feel that here divine realities are laid before him. The test of experience of this salvation is open to all. Every one may satisfy himself that the kingdom of God is the only real salvation for our souls, in which God offers everything we need for deliverance from sin and evil, and for the healing of moral disease.





PART V.

**THE WAY OF SALVATION:**

THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SUPREME GOOD.

worlds. But this opinion can hardly be substantiated. In proof of it passages like the following are quoted, which no doubt have reference to the performance of sacrifices:

2. So humbly worship Varuṇa, the Mighty;  
revere the wise Guard of the World Immortal.  
May he vouchsafe us triply-barred protection.  
O Earth and Heaven, within your lap preserve us!
3. Sharpen this song of him who strives his utmost,  
sharpen, God Varuṇa, his strength and insight;  
May we ascend the ship that bears us safely,  
whereby we may pass over all misfortune. *Rig. VIII, 42, 2, 3.*

The poet prays for Varuṇa's help in offering his prayer, which presumably had to accompany the performance of a sacrifice. The hymn and the sacrifice are compared to a ship in which he wishes to sail across the river or the ocean of all misfortune. But it is very doubtful whether he conceived this voyage as a journey to the heavenly world. What he asks for is the protection of God Varuṇa in the manifold misfortunes of earthly life. Apart from the expression "Guard of the World Immortal" which probably is only a designation of Varuṇa as the king of the immortal gods, the heavenly world is not mentioned in the context. In the following passage it is also doubtful whether the goal of the voyage is really the heavenly world:

- As though we offered up our gifts to Indra,  
may we ascend him as a ship for safety.  
Like the two wide worlds, broad, deep, far-extended,  
may we be safe both when he comes and leaves you.  
*Rig. X, 178, 2.*

Here "the two wide worlds" are this visible world, *viz.*, the earth and the sky; and there is no allusion at all to the departure from this world to heaven. Indra himself is to be the ship that carries his worshippers safely through this life and especially over all the floods of misery and misfortune.

Of course, it cannot be denied that in later times, down to our own days, these and similar passages, where sacrifice

and prayer are compared to a ship, were understood to allude to a voyage to heaven. In the same way later on, sacrifice was extolled as a vessel in which men might travel to those fields of bliss and glory, and in general obtain the fulfilment of their highest wishes. Thus we read in Atharvaveda XVIII, 4, 2:

The Seasons, Deities, form and order Worship,  
butter, cake, ladles, sacrificial weapons.

Tread thou God-travelled paths whereby the righteous  
payers of sacrifices go to Svarga.

In the Brāhmaṇas especially sacrifice is in various terms described as the road to heaven. Certain parts of the ritual belonging to a certain Soma-sacrifice were designated as the "boat-voyage of six days (*śaḍaha abhiplava*)". It may remain undecided whether this term originally alluded to the voyage to heaven in the vessel of sacrifice. At all events it was subsequently interpreted in that way:

To the heavenly world they made their voyage. Because they made the voyage, therefore they (these days of sacrifice) are called voyage (*abhiplavāḥ*).  
*Śatapatha Brāhm. XII, 2, 2, 10.*

Or:

The six days' voyage (*abhiplavāḥ śaḍaha*) is like a straight path to the heavenly world; the six days' celebration with Prishṭha-hymns is like a long circular road to the heavenly world.  
*Āit. Brāhm. IV, 17.*

The sacrifices are also called a bridge, or a dam leading to heaven:

At every Soma-sacrifice he sacrifices; thus the sacrificer prepares a bridge for himself, an ascent for the attainment of the heavenly world.

*Taittirīya Saṃhitā VII, 5, 8, 5.*

As Agni takes the sacrifices to the gods, he is extolled in the following way:

Agni has stretched out the heavenly thread;  
thou Agni art the thread for us, the bridge;  
Thou art the road which leadeth to the gods:  
let us with thee rise to the highest heaven.

*Taittir. Brāhm. II, 4, 2, 6<sup>1</sup>.*

In the Upanishads, too, sacrifice is frequently considered as the road to heaven. We may remember the doctrine of the

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Kittel, *On Sacrifice* (Mangalore, 1872).

five sacrificial fires, considered above (p. 311, ff.). These fires are there, of course, interpreted allegorically. But this interpretation itself proves how little even the sages of the Upanishads could get rid of the idea that sacrifices are of the highest importance for the attainment of the highest goal of the Brahman-world:

He who knows these five sacrificial fires is not tainted with sin even by intercourse with those (criminals): holy, pure, a denizen of the world of bliss is he who thus knows them, yea, who thus knows them. *Chhând. Up. V, 10, 10.*

Similar passages frequently occur, *e. g.*:

This is the road, this sacrifice, this Brahman. This is the truth. Nobody shall deviate from this path and nobody shall transgress it. For the ancients did not transgress it, and these who transgressed it were lost.

*Āitar. Āraṇy. Up. II, 1, 1, 1—3.*

The commentator observes regarding this passage, that there are two roads, *viz.*, sacrifice and knowledge of the Brahman. But this is dogmatic interpretation from the fully developed Vedānta point of view. The context speaks of only one road, which is sacrifice and Brahman, the latter meaning clearly prayer, Vedic hymns, for the hymns were originally called Brahman. Only in this sense can the author say that the ancients kept strictly to this road. But even in the interpretation of the commentator the passage proves how highly the Vedic sacrifices were estimated as the road to heaven.

In the Upanishads themselves theosophic criticism, which took a rather low estimate of the heavenly worlds as well as of sacrifices as a way to them, began to raise its objections against this view of the sacrifices. But this criticism itself shows how wide-spread and deep-rooted at that time was the belief in sacrifices as a road to heaven. In a remarkable way both, that high estimation of sacrifices and an unsparing criticism of the same, are found together in Muṇḍaka Upanishad I, 2, 1. 2. 6:

This is the truth. The sacrificial works which the poets saw in the sacred hymns, were frequently performed in the Treta age. Perform them carefully, ye lovers of truth; they are for you the road to that world where virtue is rewarded. Yes, when the sacrificial fire has been kindled and the bright flame flickers upwards, then people may bring their offerings between the two

oblations of butter. Hither, hither! so the shining oblations call out, carrying the sacrificer as on the rays of the sun. With sweet speech they welcome and praise him: this is the sacred world of rewarded virtue.

In reading this passage we can hardly avoid the impression that the poet here ridicules the view that the bliss of the Brahman-world may be obtained by sacrifices. Yes, let every one who wishes to have his virtue or his good works rewarded, see how to obtain his end on this low path! But this reward is in itself a doubtful thing, for it leads only deeper into the complications and sufferings of transmigration. Therefore the sage gives vent to his disgust with the folly of the sacrificial system:

Fragile, indeed, are the boats of sacrifices, the eighteen which comprise the lower work: fools are those who greet this as the highest good; they ever and again fall a prey to old age and death. These fools dwell in the midst of error, wise in themselves and boasting of their knowledge; so they wander about heavily beaten like blind men led by the blind. *Mund. Up. I, 2, 7. 8.*

Here too sacrifices are compared to vessels (*plava*). But they are wanting in firmness and security. Before those eighteen boats containing the lower ritual of the Vedic sacrifices reach the opposite shore, they will be smashed by the storm. He is a fool who, believing they lead to the heavenly world, trusts in them and greets them as the highest good. Such a man will again and again return to old age and death and all the sufferings of transmigration. Then the author makes to pass before us the Brahmans of his time who, puffed up and conceited by their Vedic learning, are destitute of true knowledge, and therefore wander about tormented by the pains and sufferings of transmigration like blind men led by the blind. Another passage passes a similar judgement on sacrifices, stating at the same time what, in the opinion of the author, should take their place—*Bṛihadār Up. III, 8, 10* (see above, p. 99). Neither sacrifices nor austerities are of any use with regard to the fate of man after death. Only the knowledge of the Imperishable, the Brahman, is of any value. This knowledge, according to the opinion of those mystic sages, is the true way to liberation.

## 2. THE WAY OF WISDOM AND ASCETICISM.

It was natural that a new way should be sought that would lead to the new *summum bonum* of union with the Brahman, which gradually eclipsed the glory of those heavenly worlds. The way out of the cycle of transmigration to union with the Brahman was no longer found in the Vedic sacrifices. What connection was there between them and union with the Brahman, as they were only offered to individual deities? What is, above all, necessary for union with the Brahman is the knowledge that the Brahman is all, and that there is nothing beside it. Here the doctrine of the Godhead and that of the *summum bonum* are really one and the same thing. He, upon whom the true knowledge of the Brahman has dawned, possesses also the supreme good, the liberation of his soul. Thus the way to liberation is already given in the doctrine of the Brahman. As the Brahman is the innermost Self of man, the way to liberation consists in the spiritual comprehension of the Brahman, as it is revealed in the individual Self of man. This has appeared more than once in the course of our study, so that it may suffice to quote one or two characteristic passages more from the Upanishads.

### TRUE KNOWLEDGE THE MEANS OF LIBERATION.

In Chhândogya Upanishad VIII, 1, 5. 6 we read as follows:

When the body grows old, this (the Brahman) does not become infirm; it is not killed, if the body is killed. This is the true Brahman-castle. In the Brahman all wishes are included. This Self is free from evil, free from the infirmities of old age, free from death, free from suffering, free from hunger, free from thirst; only longing for truth, only wishing for truth, as here in this world people obey the command of, and are dependent on, that which they have come to like, be it a dwelling-place or a strip of corn-field. And as here on earth a world gained by labour perishes, even so perishes the world gained by good works. Those, therefore, who depart from this world without having found the Self, together with those wishes, they will only find bondage in all the worlds. But they who depart after having found the Self and those true wishes will receive freedom in all the worlds.

In order to obtain liberation by union with the Brahman, man must even in this life know, or as the author here says, find, the true Self in his own Self. In this, then, all wishes are included and satisfied. This is the way to liberation, which however, according to this passage, does not come till after death. We read the same in *Bṛihadār*. Up. iv, 4, 8:

The narrow, long path reaching up to me has been found by me. On it the sages knowing the Brahman went to the heavenly world, and from there they went even higher as liberated spirits.

This path is here understood as the way of wisdom to liberation, for it leads beyond the heavenly world to absolute union with the Brahman. We read the same in *Taitt*. Up. ii, 1:

He who knows the Brahman, obtains the highest Brahman. Concerning this it is said: "Truth, wisdom, infinity is the Brahman. Whosoever knows it as enclosed in the cave (of the heart) and in the highest ether, will obtain all wishes with the allwise Brahman."

And finally we read in *Śvetāśvat*. Up. i, 7, 8:

What has been extolled is the highest Brahman. In it is the triad. It is the secure support and the Imperishable. When those who know the Brahman have found that which is here within, they are dissolved into the Brahman, quite devoted to it, delivered from further births.

The triad, which, according to this passage lies enclosed in the Brahman, consists (1) of *bhoktar*, the enjoyer, *i.e.*, the individual Self, which in transmigration eats the fruit of its works; (2) of *bhogya*, the thing to be enjoyed, *i.e.*, primordial matter; and (3) of *preritar* the impeller and guide, *i.e.*, *Īśvara*. The sage must therefore know his own individual Self, the outward world of perception, and the aggregation of individual deities in *Īśvara*; he must know all these modifications of the absolute Brahman, the support which bears all existence and which alone is the Imperishable. With the knowledge of the Brahman as the innermost substance of all existence liberation is reached, *i.e.*, deliverance from the cycle of births by absorption in the Brahman. It will be observed that the last passage contains a more developed view of the way of knowledge, than do the preceding quotations. Whereas, according to the passages from



the Bṛihadāraṇyaka and Chhāndogya Upanishads, *i. e.*, the more ancient documents, liberation only comes when the sage departs from earth, according to the Śvetāśvatara passage, the wise man is liberated as soon as the knowledge of the true, absolute Brahman has dawned upon him. Such is in fact the course of the historical evolution through which these ideas have passed.

#### PREPARATION FOR TRUE KNOWLEDGE.

Thus the attainment of liberation seems to be a very simple thing. All that is required is to comprehend the Brahman as the sole entity, as the intellectual principle in all individual beings, as the innermost essence of our own Self, and liberation is accomplished. But this knowledge of the Brahman had only dawned upon those ancient sages after long and tiresome search. And properly speaking it was also opposed to traditional religion, as well as to the empiric consciousness of man, who does not immediately recognise himself as the only absolute entity. And on the other hand the way was to be pointed out by which this knowledge, so contrary to common views, was to be obtained. This is indeed frequently done in the Upanishads, and it is hardly possible to gather a homogeneous, consistent view from the different statements of the Upanishads. Now sacrifices and ceremonies, now the acquisition of the sacred knowledge connected with them, now good works, now austerities and self-mortification are considered as preparations or even as the means of obtaining true wisdom. By such means as these the human soul is to be drawn away from worldly things and worldly doings, to get rid of all other wishes, and be ready for the knowledge of the highest Brahman. This liberating wisdom can be received only by pure, pious souls whose thoughts are turned to that one thing only. Therefore it is all-important for man to separate himself from evil fellowship, from the world and its ways, for these things would divert his thoughts from the care for his everlasting good. In Maitr. Brahm. Up. vii, 8, there is a long list of obstacles to

the pursuit of the knowledge of the Brahman: beggars who make a profession of sacred austerities, people of the Śūdra caste, or such as perform sacrifices for these unclean ones, or even go so far as to try and learn wisdom from them; dancers, jugglers, actors, sorcerers, or even rationalist critics of the Veda — these are the people whose company must be avoided by him who wishes to obtain the knowledge of the Brahman.

On the other hand, he who longs for liberating wisdom must practise good works and must, above all, learn the Veda by heart, by way of preparation. The question concerning what is necessary as a preparation for the knowledge of the Brahman, is answered in the following way by the Taittir. Up. I, 9:

Righteousness and study and proclamation of the Veda, truthfulness and study and proclamation, austerities and self-discipline and . . . tranquillity and . . . the sacrificial fires and . . . the Agnihotra sacrifice and . . . hospitality and . . . kindness and . . . children and . . . , begetting of children and . . . more descendants and study and proclamation of the Veda.

And then it goes on in I, 11:

After the study of the Veda the teacher instructs his pupil in the following way: "Speak the truth, practise virtue, never give up studying the Veda. Bring desirable reward to your teacher and never cut the thread of progeny. Deviate not from truth, deviate not from virtue, deviate not from good custom. Neglect not ability, neglect not the study and proclamation of the Veda, neglect not the sacrifices due to the gods. Let thy mother be thy God; let thy father be thy God; let thy teacher be thy God; let thy guest be thy God. Practise such works as are blameless and no others; practise the good works which we practised and no others. Offer a seat for rest to such Brahmins as are better than we. Giving is to be practised with pleasure, not with displeasure; what one gives ought to be given with kindness, with modesty, with reverence, with understanding."

At the conclusion all this is called a 'secret doctrine of the Veda (*vedopanishad*)'. Very likely we have here the usual final exhortation of the teacher to his departing pupils. But it is now considered as a summary of all that is necessary as a preparation for the knowledge of the Brahman. The fact that the exhortation is said to be a *vedopanishad* tends to show that this is correct. This preparation, therefore, not only

includes the study of the Veda, but also a certain moral qualification, of which the principal feature is respectful behaviour towards parents, teachers, and superiors. It is remarkable that in these two passages the attainment of liberating wisdom and with it, of course, of liberation itself, are confined to the Brahman caste, which may perhaps include the two other Āryan castes of the warriors and the people, whereas the Śūdras, *i. e.*, all the non-Āryan classes, are excluded. It is necessary in our time to state this explicitly, because educated Hindus of the lower castes continually deny it. But in this passage it is impossible to explain it away. According to Maitr. Br. Up. VII, 8, the Śūdra as such is considered as excluded from acquiring the knowledge of the Brahman, and this is also pre-supposed in Taittir. Up. I, 9.

Further, a chaste, abstemious life is demanded by way of preparation for the knowledge of the Brahman:

What is usually called sacrifice is really abstinence (*brahmacharya*). For he who understands the matter finds that (Brahman) through abstinence.

Then two kinds of sacrifices, the vow of solitary silence, fasting, and hermit-life in the woods, *i. e.*, all the religious exercises of those times, are identified with abstinence, after which the passage concludes as follows:

This Brahman-world then belongs to those who by abstinence find the waters Ara and Nya in the Brahman-world and in all the worlds they obtain liberty. *Chhānd. Up. VIII, 5, 1—3.*

This abstinence is principally celibacy, but in other things also the seeker after wisdom is to practise self-denial and to renounce the goods of this world:

All this, which moves on the earth, is to be hidden in the ruler. When you have renounced this, then you may enjoy it. Do not desire another man's wealth. *Iśa. Up. 1.*

As in reality all that is on this world is nothing but the Absolute Self, which appears here in its first personification as Īśvara, everything that a man has or wishes to have should be given up to this Self. Then and only then he may enjoy it

in and with the Absolute Self. Then also there will be no more unlawful desire for another man's wealth. This renunciation is part of the mind's preparation for the reception of the liberating knowledge of the Brahman.

A further part of the preparation, which is emphasised again and again, is the mortification of all other desires. All desires, also the desire for happiness and bliss in the heavenly world, must give way to the one pursuit of the knowledge of the Brahman:

He knows the highest home of the Brahman, where everything enclosed sparkles brightly. They who without desire revere the highest Self, these sages have escaped from new births. He who continues to cherish wishes in his mind is born again and again through his wishes; but he whose desire is satisfied and whose mind is purified, to him all his desires die away even here below. *Mund. Up. III, 2, 1. 2.*

#### SELF-MORTIFICATION.

As it is the desires which fetter a man to the misery of transmigration, and as desires make man a slave, the Absolute Self must be sought with simplicity without desire. But only when lawful desire is fulfilled, when the mind is purified through the knowledge of the Brahman, all other desires will die of themselves. Bodily austerities (*tapas*) are recommended for the mortification of desires and the direction of all desires and thoughts to the Brahman. It is not stated what those austerities should be. The word itself means warmth, heat, burning pain. The austerities probably consisted principally in renunciation of the comforts of life, of the intercourse with men, and of family life, in abstinence from all food not found in the forest, in bearing the heat of the Indian sun and the inclemency of the weather. In the same way a Brahman named Varuṇa says, in *Taittir. Up. III, 5*, in answer to his son's request—Teach me the Brahman:

Try to know the Brahman by self-mortification. Self-mortification is the Brahman.

That means, self-mortification is the means of acquiring the knowledge of the Brahman.

Besides self-mortification truthfulness and self-knowledge are recommended in Śvetāśvat. Up. I, 15. 16:

As oil in seeds, as butter in milk, as water in the river-bed, as fire in sticks, so the highest Self is contained in the Self, if it is discerned by truth and austerities. If the Self is discerned which pervades all existence, as milk is contained in butter—in self-knowledge and austerities it has its roots—that is the Brahman of the secret doctrine.

“Truth” here probably means a mind open to truth, without which that highest wisdom cannot be acquired. Self-knowledge and austerities are as indispensable as truth. Austerities are conducive to self-knowledge, which knows the highest Self in the individual Self and therefore is the knowledge of the Brahman. It may be assumed that austerities were sometimes carried so far as to extinguish ordinary consciousness and to produce ecstasy. In this intellectual condition what Śāṅkara calls “the right vision” (*samyagdarśana*) dawns upon the pious ascetic who keeps his thoughts concentrated on the Brahman; in other words, his individual self-consciousness is absorbed in the thought of the Absolute Self. This, according to our views, not very desirable state of the intellect, is considered as the sun-rise of the true knowledge of the Brahman.

#### THE PRACTICE OF YOGA.

These austerities are also called Yoga, that is, ‘union’ or ‘concentration’. This is the name of a whole system of asceticism ascribed to Patañjali, which does not belong to Śruti, *i.e.*, Vedic literature. In the Śvetāśvatara and Maitrāyaṇa Upanishads the Yoga appears already as a fully developed and well-known system; we must therefore assume that the asceticism of the Yoga, though perhaps not the teaching of Patañjali, was already known to the authors of those works. Thus we read in Śvetāśvat. Up. II, 8—11:

In the Brahman-boat the wise man crosses all the dreadful rivers, if he keeps his body right even with the three upper parts and turns the mind and the senses to the heart; suppressing his breath and unstirring let him draw

gentle breath through his nose! Like a vehicle with wild horses the sage should control his mind. In a plain, clean place, free from pebbles, free from fire and dust, sweet to the mind with sounds, with water, bowers, beautiful sight, quiet secluded nooks, devotion should be practised. Mist and smoke, sun, wind, and fire, fire-flies, lightning, and chrystalline moonlight, these are the first things which appear in the Brahman during devotional exercises.

Thus in practising Yoga-asceticism the body must first take an even, uniformly quiet position, *i.e.*, the three upper parts—the trunk, neck and head—should stand upright. Then the senses, together with the mind, must be directed to the heart, *i.e.*, to the seat of the Absolute Self, so that all distraction by the outside world is prevented. Then breathing should be regulated: the vital airs, which cause all kinds of disorder in the body, must be suppressed, so that the yogin sits there motionless and only slightly breathing through his nose. Above all, the mind, the seat of the desires which bind man to life, should be controlled, lest it run away like a vehicle with wild horses, goaded by the desires. For this Yoga-exercise a quiet, clean place should be chosen, free from rough pebbles, from smoke, badly smelling fire, and from dust; but sweet and pleasant to the ear with the song of birds and other sounds of nature, and to the eye with flowers. Of course, water should not be wanting, and this implies a cool breeze. Finally the place should have secret, secluded corners suitable for reverent meditation on the Brahman, which should not be disturbed by anything strange or unpleasant in the surroundings. We see here that those cruel self-torturing methods, which were subsequently invented by and for the yogins, were at that time not yet thought of; yet these exercises are explicitly designated as Yoga, and their effects are indicated. In the Brahman, that means probably, when the ascetic in his ecstasy is united with the Brahman, there appear thick clouds of mist and smoke, through which the sunlight breaks with storm and fire; then there appear small flames, sparkling like fire-flies, the flashes of lightning, and last of all gentle chrystalline moonlight, the most adequate symbol of the Brahman. In this intellectual dusk, which is so very much

like moonlight, the union of the individual Self with the Absolute Self is accomplished.

Then the author goes on to describe the effects of the Yoga :

If earth, water, light, air, ether arise, then the fivefold action of the Yoga proceeds: for him who has obtained a body of Yoga fire there is no more sickness, old age, and death. *Śvetūsvat. Up. II, 12.*

The true nature of the five elements named in the text now dawns upon the inner eye, for the yogin sees that all these are only manifestations, or vestures, as it were, of the true Self. The fivefold action of the Yoga may now begin. The yogin receives a body of fire produced through his asceticism, and he is no longer subject to the evils of transmigration. This is liberation. Then the text enumerates those results which belong only to this earthly life, such as lightness of body, health, freedom from all kinds of desires, a fair complexion, a beautiful sound of the voice, sweet smell, *etc.*, all of which are only partly and loosely connected with liberation. In II, 14 the most important result is summed up :

As a mirror covered with dust beams brightly, if it is well cleansed, so if the individual Self beholds the essence of the Self, it has reached the goal and is free from suffering.

Yoga-asceticism thus has for its object the removal of the dirty crust of ignorance from the individual Self, that the latter may behold within itself the Absolute Self, and so all sufferings of transmigration cease and liberation is attained. Yoga, therefore, may here be taken in its original meaning as union, *viz.*, with the Absolute Self:

If a man practises Yoga for six months, and is entirely free (from the external world), then complete union (*yoga*) is attained, which is endless, high, and secret. *Mathr. Brahm. Up. VI, 28.*

We learn here that six months were required for the accomplishment of the Yoga-exercises.

#### USE OF THE SYLLABLE OM.

The Yoga-exercises were connected with devout meditations on the Brahman. For this purpose the Upanishads themselves

recommend the study of their own mystic doctrine and the use of the mystic syllable *Om*. Originally this syllable may have been a solemn confirmation, such as *Amen* in the Bible, and was used in worship at the beginning and the end of recitations of Vedic texts. We have seen how in later times the ingenuity of the theosophists interpreted the whole Brahman-doctrine into this syllable. Thus this mystic syllable, also called *Pranava*, *i.e.*, what is sounded forth, is to keep the Absolute Brahman present to the ascetic thinker in his meditations, till he thinks and knows nothing but this Absolute Brahman:

Seize the bow of the Upanishads, the great weapon, and put the arrow sharpened by pious meditation on it. Then bend it with your consciousness directed to the existent and know the Imperishable, my dear, as your aim.—The mystic syllable is the bow, the Self is the arrow, and the Brahman is called the aim. It is only hit by him who is not careless; he is united with it as the arrow with the target. . . . He wanders about, becoming multiform within, where the veins meet like the spokes in the nave. Meditate on the Self by pronouncing *Om*. Hail to you, in your passing beyond darkness.

*Mund. Up. II, 2, 4. 6.*

The simile here appears rather strange. The aspiration after union with the Brahman is compared to shooting an arrow. Some words in the text are obscure. But it is easy to see the main point. The Upanishads, as summed up in the syllable *Om*, are the bow without which the aim, union with the Brahman, cannot be hit. The individual Self is the arrow, which by this bow is conveyed to the Absolute Self. As the arrow enters into the target, so, by means of the doctrine of the Upanishads as summed up in the syllable *Om*, the individual soul is united with the Absolute Spirit. Without the syllable *Om*, therefore, the aim is not to be attained.

#### INSTRUCTION BY A TEACHER.

It might seem that, provided with these means, a man desirous of liberation, ought to be able to reach his aim. But this is not the case, for the preliminary conditions are not yet



exhausted. Several Upanishads declare that knowledge of the Brahman can only be obtained by the personal instruction of a teacher, and that it is not lawful for a man to acquire it in any other way,—a precept remarkable in more respects than one. This is not contrary to the passage quoted last, if we may understand the word Upanishad at the beginning of it as “secret doctrine”. Historically this precept has its origin in the fact that the Brahman-wisdom, opposed as it was to the traditional belief concerning the gods, originally belonged only to small circles of initiated sages, who did not venture to proclaim it publicly, for fear of being charged with atheism. Thus they were under the necessity of keeping the great discovery secret, and of confiding it only to carefully prepared pupils. In several Upanishad texts this fact is still perfectly transparent:

It is so that many cannot even bear to hear of it, and many, when they hear of it, do not understand it. He is to be admired who has found it and is qualified to proclaim it; also he is to be admired who, being taught by one qualified, knows it.—It is not easy to comprehend, if proclaimed by a base man, even though it be much meditated upon. It is inaccessible, if communicated by another, because, what should not be supposed, it is smaller than the smallest. *Kath. Up. I, 2, 7. 8.*

They who cannot bear to hear about the Brahman were doubtless those who clung to the Vedic gods and the ceremonies of their worship, and had their suspicions concerning the new wisdom of the Brahman. Many of them certainly could not even understand the new doctrine, even if they heard it. For in those times a certain proficiency in abstract thinking was certainly necessary to comprehend such an abstract idea as the Brahman. Therefore our author admires the teacher who possesses this wisdom and is able to communicate it to his pupils; he even admires the pupil who can understand the wisdom communicated to him. But the teacher must not be a base man, which means probably, that he must not belong to the Śūdra caste. Further without initiation by another, the secret is inaccessible, because it is smaller than the smallest, *i. e.*,

it is not a material but only a metaphysical entity, which it is not easy to comprehend.

Another passage contains a graphic description of the indispensability and the task of a teacher:

My dear, it is just as if somebody brought a man blindfold from the country of the Gandhāras (modern Kandahar), and left him standing in an uninhabited place; as if he was brought there blindfold and was left standing there blindfold, now turning to the east, now to the north, now to the south, now to the west; as if then somebody took the bandage from his eyes, and told him in that direction was Gandhāra, and in that direction he must walk; and as if then, asking for and obtaining information from village to village, he as an intelligent man were to find his way back to Gandhāra. Even so a man who has a teacher obtains knowledge. For him the delay lasts only till he is delivered from his body. Then he obtains perfection.

*Chhānd. Up. VI, 14, 1. 2.*

The commentator reads more into this simile than was originally intended by the author. In his interpretation the uninhabited country becomes a wood with wild beasts and other dangers, which is meant as an allusion to the sufferings of transmigration; the bandage before his eyes becomes the manifold desires for earthly happiness and welfare. Nothing of the kind is to be found in the text. The simile only describes the helplessness of man with regard to the knowledge of the Brahman, if he has no teacher; he is like a man whom highway men have blindfolded, and fettered, and left alone in an unknown, uninhabited country. If he is to find the way back to his own country, *i.e.*, to the knowledge of the Brahman, the teacher must take the bandage of ignorance from his eyes and direct his thoughts to the Self within him. If he has comprehended this, and if he is a man of some intelligence, he will find the rest of the way by himself: the knowledge of the Self dawns upon him, and nothing more is needed for his union with the Brahman, but the death of his body.

According to this passage, man, though he be willing, cannot find the knowledge of the Brahman without the help of a teacher. Another passage says that he is not to try and find it, even if he is able to do so. Such a usurpation of liberating wisdom without the teacher's instruction would miss the aim.

Once a pupil came to his teacher. The latter seeing him said: "Thou beamest, my dear, like a man that knows the Brahman; who taught it thee?" The pupil replied: "Somebody that is quite different from men. Thou, O venerable one, be pleased to tell it me at my desire. For I heard from the like of thee, O venerable one, that only wisdom that is received from a teacher obtains the highest boon." The teacher acknowledges the truth of these words and imparts the desired knowledge to him. *Chhând. Up. IV, 9, 1—3.*

It is not explicitly stated in the Upanishads, whether the ascetical preparation is to precede the teacher's instruction, or whether it is to be practised during the stay with the teacher. The latter opinion seems to be the natural course, and at all events is not contrary to the texts. Compare the following passage—*Śvetâś. Up. vi, 22 f.*:

By the power of his austerities and by the pleasure of God the wise Śvetâśvatara has made known the highest Brahman to the highest hermits, in the right way and so as to please the band of singers. The highest mystery of the Vedânta, already proclaimed in past ages, should not be made known to any one whose mind has not become calm, and who is not either a son or a pupil. These things shine in full splendour, if made known to a high-minded man, filled with veneration towards God, also towards his teacher.

The pupils, to whom Śvetâśvatara, after whom this Upanishad is called, communicates the Brahman-knowledge, are hermits of the highest class. Max Müller, in his notes on this passage, mentions the different classes of hermits as enumerated by Śankara: (1) *Kuṭichakas*, dwellers in huts, wearing a reddish gown, a bamboo cane with three knots, and having their hair tied in a knot on the crown of their heads; they are provided with the sacred cord, the badge of the twice-born; (2) *Bahūdakas*, likewise dressed in an ochre-red gown, separated from their families and all human society, and living upon alms, for which they beg in seven houses; (3) *Hamsas*, leading the same life as the former, and carrying a bamboo cane with only one knot; (4) *Paramahamsas*, with long hair and beard, in all other things like the three preceding classes. The latter stage is the highest of hermits (*āśramin*, also called *sannyāsin* = renouncer). According to the above quotation, Śvetâśvatara made known to this class the wisdom of the Brahman. Thus we see that here austerities together with the practice of Yoga,

preceded the communication of the secret doctrine. And it was believed that only when made known to such well-prepared pupils, it could be revealed in its true glory and value. At the same time this passage forbids the teacher to make the secret known to any one but his own son or pupil, *i.e.*, to any person that is not well-known to him. Compare concerning this prohibition Bṛihadār. Up. vi, 3, 12 and Maitr. Up. vi, 29.

Apart from the necessity of a teacher these conditions for receiving the Brahman-knowledge are summed up in two distichs which supplement one another, Kath. Up. II, 24 and Muṇḍ. Up. III, 2, 4 :

He who has not given up his bad conduct, who is not free from sensual passions, who is not composed and of a tranquil mind, cannot reach the Self by knowledge. — The Self is not attainable for the weak man, not for the lazy and not for him who has no mark of self-mortification; if the wise man pursues it with these means, his soul will enter into the home of the Brahman.

But even this is not the last word with regard to the way of wisdom. Neither a man's own painstaking, nor the teacher's efforts, neither austerities nor meditation is of any use, if the absolute Self does not reveal itself to man—such is an identical statement of two Upanishad passages — Kath. Up. II, 23; Muṇḍ. Up. 2, 3:

This Self is not attainable by instruction, nor by the intellect, nor by Veda knowledge; he only may attain it whom it chooses; yea to him the Self unveils its own nature.

This passage becomes twice mysterious, if we remember that the Self is an impersonal being. How can this impersonal being choose? And if we may take this choice as a kind of affinity, a natural disposition for the knowledge of the Brahman, why then are some chosen and others omitted? There is no answer to be found to this question.

#### THE WAY TO THE BRAHMAN-WORLD.

The above is what is usually called the way to liberation, *i.e.*, the way of wisdom (*jñānamārga*). But in reality what

has here been considered are the pre-requisites and means for liberation. The actual way to the world of the Brahman in its different stages is described in three different Upanishads; the statements, however, do not always agree. In considering the doctrine of the five sacrificial fires (see above, p. 311 ff.) we have become acquainted with the way of the gods supposed to lead into the Brahman-world. The particular stages of this way, according to Bṛihadār. Up. vi, 2, 15, are the following: (1) the flame of the funeral fire; (2) the day; (3) the half month of the crescent; (4) the half year when the days increase; (5) the world of gods; (6) the sun; (7) the place of lightning; (8) the Brahman. In Chhānd. Up. we find for (5) the year; between (6) the sun, and (7) the place of lightning, the moon is inserted so that we get nine stages. Kaushitaki Up. i, 3 has a different succession of stages: (1) *Agniloka*, the world of Agni; (2) *Vāyuloka*, the world of Vāyu, the wind; (3) *Varuṇaloka*, the world of Varuṇa; (4) *Indraloka*, the world of Indra; (5) *Prajāpatiloka*, the world of Prajāpati; (6) *Brahmaloka*, the world of the Brahman, or Brahmā (the creator). This way is also called the way of the gods. But this Brahman-world is already inhabited by the Apsaras, the women of the heavenly worlds, who are painted in the most sensual colours by the later Purāṇa literature. This way of the gods, therefore, can hardly be considered to be connected with the way of wisdom. At all events the wisdom which here speaks is of a very questionable kind. But these lists of stages are of very little importance, and we may leave it to Śankara's ingenuity to harmonise the three lists.

On the whole, the Upanishads describe the departure to and the union with the Brahman in very general expressions; for, properly speaking, there can be no departure to the omnipresent and all-pervading Brahman:

All the ascetics, who have well comprehended the aim of the Vedānta doctrine, and whose nature has become pure by the practice of renunciation, at the last end reach immortality in the Brahman-worlds and are perfectly liberated. Their fifteen parts resume their element, their gods (senses) into

the corresponding deities (natural phenomena); their works, and their Self consisting of knowledge, are united with the Highest, the Imperishable.

*Mund. Up. III, 2, 6.*

This then is the way of wisdom to liberation according to the Upanishads. Well may one of those sages exclaim:

Arise and be brave! Go to the elect and mark it: it is difficult to walk on the sharp edge of a shaving-knife! Therefore the sages say, the path (to the Brahman) is difficult to go. *Kath. Up. I, 3, 14.*

Truly, the way of wisdom is difficult of access; for many it is quite inaccessible.

### 3. THE VARIOUS WAYS OF PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.

The advocates of philosophic Hinduism often say that, as all rivers, in whatever direction they may flow, will finally fall into the sea, so all ways, however different, will finally lead to salvation and union with the Supreme Being. From the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta point of view this is extremely inconsistent. But this much is true that the documents of philosophic Hinduism offer in fact quite a number of ways to liberation. And it is not easy to unite them all into the one way of wisdom, which alone agrees with the monism of the Vedānta.

#### THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO SĀṆKHYA.

The way of knowledge first of all belongs to the Sāṅkhya school.<sup>1</sup> The whole philosophy of this school claims to be the means of getting rid of pain and of obtaining liberation. To the whole Sāṅkhya school, in all the phases of its development it is a matter of course that suffering can be removed neither by ordinary, material medicines, nor by sensual

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, p. 133 ff.; 327 ff.

pleasures. For, after a short time of comfort which they may bring about, pain will return again and again, either in the present, or in a future existence. Likewise the sacrifices and religious works prescribed by the Veda are quite insufficient. Especially the sacrifices, in performing which animals must be killed and blood be shed, are for that very reason sinful; and this sin, according to the law of recompense, must find its punishment in pain. Besides, only the rich can afford to offer sacrifices, which involves an injustice to the poor, which is again subject to the law of recompense. But even supposing that man might actually reach the heavenly world in the vessel of sacrifices, there would be a twofold disadvantage: having arrived there he would be grieved to see that still happier spheres arise above him, and that even the highest sphere does not afford eternal liberation from suffering, for the ever new misery of transmigration comes again and again even upon the inhabitants of the worlds of the gods. Only knowledge can bring about everlasting liberation:

By virtue an ascent to a higher region is obtained, by vice a descent into a lower region. Liberation is gained by knowledge and bondage by the contrary. *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* 44.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Sāṅkhya Sūtras* we find a similar statement:

By knowledge comes liberation. This being the real cause of liberation, there can be neither additions nor evasions.

What, then, is this knowledge that leads to liberation? To this we may answer: the whole philosophy of the *Sāṅkhya* school. For in order to impart this liberating knowledge the *Sāṅkhya* school leads its disciples through the material principles of matter up to primordial matter and the Self dwelling in it. And for the same purpose the school sets forth its doctrine about the development of the universe, about the individual soul and its organs, and about the absolute Self in its relation to the empiric Self. We may, therefore, simply say that the

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 144.

liberating knowledge consists in right distinction between Prakṛiti and Puruṣha. Or, as we read in Sāṅkhya Kārikā 2 :

The discriminative knowledge of the developed, of the undeveloped and of the knowing (Self).

The “developed” is the empiric world; the “undeveloped” is Prakṛiti, from which the former arises; the knowing principle is the pure Self, which is absolutely different from both the former. If this distinction is grasped, pain begins to die and by degrees ceases altogether :

If in consequence of this distinction pain has ceased even to the last remainder, then the goal is reached, but by nothing else.

*Sāṅkhya Sūtra III, 14.*<sup>1</sup>

Pain is caused by the delusion which transfers the self-consciousness and the feelings of the empiric Self to the absolute Self. If by correct distinction this delusion is abolished and the Soul is known in its pure existence, then there is no more transmigration and no more suffering. Of course, before full liberation (*videhamukti*) is gained, the delusive vestures must be dissolved in death. But as in the later Vedānta literature, so also according to the later Sāṅkhya documents the sage who has gained discriminative knowledge is called “liberated in the bodily life (*jīvanmukta*)”. The reason why perfect liberation by the death of the body does not come immediately after the attainment of knowledge is explained by a simile, which occurs also in Śaṅkara: as the wheel set in motion by the potter continues to revolve for some time, even after the vessel has been finished, so also life in the body continues after the attainment of knowledge, in consequence of works “whose seed sprang up and began to ripen before the obtainment of liberating knowledge”.<sup>2</sup> As the fruit of these works must be fully recompensed, he who is liberated in the body must still experience pleasure and pain, though in a smaller measure than other creatures. But the fruit of those works, whose seed had not begun to spring up, and of those performed by him

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, p. 137. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 182.



who is liberated in the body, is completely disposed of, so that he may do good or evil, as he likes, without any fear of consequences. If then also the fruits of the already germinating works are recompensed, the organs of self-consciousness and sensation are dissolved with the remaining vestures; the soul is separated from the body and returns into perfect solitude, and then all pain has ceased for ever.

### PRE-REQUISITES OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE.

In spite of the exclusive emphasis laid on knowledge as the only way of liberation, in the later Sāṅkhya documents, which probably follow the Vedānta school, works are allowed to enter, as it were, through a backdoor:

Pious meditation is a means for the abolishment of desires. It is made perfect by the suppression of the modifications (of the mind). This meditation is made perfect by restraint, by sitting in certain postures and by the fulfilment of duty. Restraint is brought about by exhalation and inhalation. Quiet and comfortable sitting is one of the postures. The fulfilment of duty is the performance of what is ordained for the class to which a man belongs.

*Sāṅkhya Sūtra III, 30—35.*

Three things are here required: devout meditation, Yoga exercises, and performance of the duties ordained in the Veda for the respective castes. These are supposed to be means of obtaining liberating knowledge. The most important thing is the abolishment of desires. It is usually called “indifference (*vairāgya*)” to worldly affairs, which in the later Sāṅkhya documents is emphatically demanded as a condition for gaining knowledge. Indifference excludes moral actions as well as sensual pleasures, grief as well as desire:

In a man whose mind is darkened in such a way the seed of instruction will not spring up. *Sāṅkhya Sūtra IV, 27. 29.*<sup>1</sup>

Man attains this renunciation only by the knowledge of the imperfection and vanity of all earthly possessions and plea-

---

<sup>1</sup> Garbe, *ibid.* p. 144.

asures. It is all the more necessary that this indifference should be brought about by knowledge, as a forced indifference would be worthless, and this indifference is only efficient, if it is voluntary. He who unites with this indifference to earthly affairs the pursuit after liberating knowledge, is, according to Sāṅkhya Sūtra iv, 3, like the swan, which is said to take the milk out of the water with which it has been mixed. A distinction is made between lower and higher indifference, the former being the pre-requisite of knowledge, whereas the latter is its result. In the first two sentences of the above quoted passage (Sāṅkhya Sūtra III, 30. 31) these two kinds of indifference are alluded to. The higher indifference is directed against the inner organ (*antahkaraṇa*) and its modifications of feeling and desire. The sage knowing these organs and their doings as the products of primordial matter in its absolute difference from the real Self, becomes as indifferent to them as to the things of the external world. The lower indifference is not necessarily conducive to the liberating knowledge. But even if it does not result in it, it is a merit and as such must be rewarded according to the doctrine of recompense, the renouncer being dissolved into primordial matter, from which he will issue as a god at the beginning of a new creation.

#### NECESSITY OF A TEACHER.

Finally the Sāṅkhya school, just as the Upanishads and the Vedānta, demands a teacher for the initiation of the ignorant into its liberating wisdom. Everybody can partake of his instruction, even women, and men of the lower, non-Aryan castes, who therefore in the Sāṅkhya school are not excluded from knowledge and liberation, as they are in the Upanishads and the Vedānta. But only the particularly capable students reach the goal of knowledge directly by the teacher's instruction; while with the ordinary student reflection (*manana*) and devout meditation (*nididhyāsana*) must be added. As moreover there is a perverse disposition in human nature, the result of non-

discrimination in former births and yet without beginning (*anādi-mithyāvāsānā*), which prevents man from obtaining the discriminative knowledge, the later Sāṅkhya documents, in order to remove this impediment, demand concentration of the mind, that is, the Yoga exercises. But all these things are only means or pre-requisites of true knowledge. Liberation is gained only by knowledge itself. Only light can drive away darkness, and only by discriminating knowledge non-discrimination, the cause of bondage, can be abolished. We are justified in asking, how can ignorance on the one hand and knowledge on the other do such great things? The Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta are agreed in raising subjective mental conditions to the position of objective metaphysical forces of immeasurable efficiency, and the doctrine of the Sāṅkhya school is therefore liable to the same objections as that of the Vedānta.

#### THE YOGA WAY OF LIBERATION.

The doctrine of the Sāṅkhya, as considered above, already bears some features of its sister school, the Yogadarśana. It may suffice here to draw attention to the principal points of the sometimes rather obscure aphorisms of Patañjali. The goal to which he wishes to lead his followers is *samādhi*, concentration or union with the Absolute Self. This appears in the very first aphorisms:

Now concentration is explained.—Yoga is restraining the mind from undergoing modification. *Yoga Sūtra I, 1. 2.*

“Mind” is here a material organ, whose function is to comprehend the Absolute Self. It should not undergo modifications, on the contrary, like the surface of a lake not rippled by a breeze, it should in itself reflect the perfectly calm and quiet pure Self. The idea that underlies all this is that the mind takes the form of the object thought of. But the Yogin has the one desire, that his mind may take the form of the absolute Self. He must therefore withdraw his thoughts from the objects

of the external world and concentrate them on the pure Self. This concentration is Samādhi.

Yoga exercises must be practised to gain this goal. Swāmi Vivekānanda distinguishes (1) Rāja Yoga, *i.e.*, the royal or chief Yoga; (2) Karma Yoga, *i.e.*, the Yoga of works; (3) Bhakti Yoga, *i.e.*, the Yoga of devotion. In lieu of the latter Garbe<sup>1</sup> mentions Haṭha Yoga, which, however, is of no immediate significance for liberation. Its opposite in the later Yoga documents is Rāja Yoga, which comprehends 'the inner exercises of the concentration of the mind', that is, the last three of the eight stages of Yoga asceticism. Karma or Kriyā Yoga comprehends the first five stages and besides the three preliminary exercises of self-mortification (*tapas*), recitation of texts (*svādhyāya*), and devotion, by which the obstacles of real concentration are to be removed. The eight stages of the Yoga proper (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*) may here be quoted in Patañjali's own words:

#### 1. YAMA, RESTRAINT.

Non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving are called Yama (restraint). *Yoga Sūtra II, 30.*

What is mentioned here are properly the moral pre-requisites. "Receiving" is said to be as bad as stealing in that it brings the mind of the receiver under the influence of the giver, so that the former loses his independence, degenerates, and becomes a slave of others.

#### 2. NIYAMA, PRECEPT.

Internal and external purification, contentment, self-mortification, study (of the Veda), and worship of God are called Niyama. *II, 32.*

What is mentioned under this head are mainly religious, ritual, and ascetic pre-requisites for the Yoga proper, among which also the preliminary exercises of the Kriyā Yoga mentioned by Garbe are referred to.

<sup>1</sup> *Sāṅkhya-Yoga*, p. 43.

## 3. ĀSANA, POSTURE.

Āsana is that which is firm and pleasant. II, 46.

This represents the different postures of body. By them the body is to be brought into a firm and comfortable posture, so that during meditation and other exercises nothing may disturb its equilibrium:

The one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column free, sitting erect and holding the three parts — the chest, neck, and head — in a straight line.<sup>1</sup>

The adherents of Patañjali pretend to know 84,000,000 different postures. Swāmi Vivekānanda says that of these every man may choose as he likes. The value of these postures may be seen from the description of one of them:

The right foot should be placed on the left thigh, the left foot on the right thigh; the hands should be crossed, and the two great toes should be firmly held thereby; the chin should be bent down on the chest, and in this posture the eyes should be directed to the tip of the nose. It is called Padmāsana (lotus-posture) and is highly beneficial in overcoming diseases.<sup>2</sup>

By this description, of course, the straight line mentioned by Swāmi Vivekānanda becomes rather doubtful. Ten different postures of that kind, as, the cow-head position, the reversed tortoise position, the fowl position, etc., are said to be the most important. But they all stand in a very loose connection with liberation.

## 4. PRĀṆĀYĀMA, THE REGULATION OF BREATH.

The fourth is the regulation of breath, by giving it an outward direction. II, 51.

According to Swāmi Vivekānanda this would mean the regulation of a cosmic principle. By Prāṇa, 'the infinite, omnipresent, manifesting power of this universe', ether (*ākāśa*), 'the infinite, omnipresent material of the universe' is to be worked into the latter. But the Yoga Sūtras themselves describe the process in quite a different way: •

Controlling the motion of exhalation and inhalation follows after this. Its modifications are either external, or internal, or motionless, regulated by place, time, and number, either long or short. II, 49, 50.

<sup>1</sup> Swāmi Vivekānanda, *Rāja Yoga*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 177.

What we are concerned with here is simply exhalation and inhalation and the retention of the breath in the lungs.

The fourth is restraining the Prāṇa by directing it either to external or internal objects. From that the covering to the light of the mind is removed.

*II, 51, 52.*

What is meant here is a fourth modification of Prāṇa. It is rather a union of the first and second modification. Its purpose is to remove the vesture of the mind that consists of Rajas and Tamas, in order that the mind which consists of particles of Sattva, may manifest its lustre.

#### 5. PRATYĀHĀRA, WITHDRAWAL.

The drawing in of the organs is brought about by their giving up their own objects and taking the form of the mind. *II, 54.*

The organs of perception and action cause disturbances in the ascetic preparation of the mind for Samādhi, for by the perceptions of the senses the mind takes the shape of the objects perceived. The action of the senses must therefore be completely withdrawn from external objects and directed inwards, where the pure Self dwells in the heart.

#### 6. DHĀRAṆĀ, CONCENTRATION.

The mind becomes fit for concentration (dhāraṇā). *II, 53.*

This is the result of the preceding exercise (5). The following aphorism says what concentration (*dhāraṇā*) means:

Dhāraṇā is the direction of the mind to a particular object. *III, 1.*

This "object" is the pure Self hidden in the empiric Self. If by Dhāraṇā the mind is directed to this alone, the light of liberating knowledge begins to dawn.

#### 7. DHYĀNA, MEDITATION.

An uninterrupted flow of the knowledge of that object (the Self) is Dhyāna. *III, 2.*

Dhyāna may also be understood as Dhāraṇā continued, without interruption, by means of which the knowledge of the Self flows into the mind, which then takes the form of the pure Self.

## 8. SAMĀDHI, ABSORPTION.

When it gives up all form and only reflects on the meaning (of Purusha), it is Samādhi. *III, 3.*

In order to comprehend the only object of devout meditation, the shapeless, eternal, unlimited Self, the mind should give up every limited form of conceptions and take the form of the pure Self. The goal of the Yoga is therefore quite the same as that of the Sāṅkhya. Only the method of obtaining the knowledge of the Self is different. Here intuitive knowledge and there discursive knowledge is aimed at.

According to the Yoga Sūtras there are different kinds or degrees of Samādhi: (1) Savitarka Samādhi and (2) Nirvitarka Samādhi — which amounts to the difference between reflective and non-reflective absorption into the Absolute Self. Either kind has its sub-divisions. The second kind, being free from the seed of works, leads directly to complete liberation; but the seed of works still clings to the first kind, wherefore it cannot overcome transmigration. Nirvitarka Samādhi is, of course, the thing aimed at. It is understood that when the eight stages of the Yoga have been gone through, this aim is reached and liberation accomplished.

Now for Karma or Kriyā Yoga:

Mortification, study, and surrendering the fruit of works to God are called Kriyā Yoga. *II, 1.*

We have found the first two points before, under the head of Rāja Yoga (2. Niyama). 'Surrendering the fruit of works to God' means here 'disinterestedness (*asaṃga*)'. Its opposite is the selfish attachment to gain and enjoyment, which are expected to result from work:

Attachment is that which dwells on pleasure. *II, 7.*

This must be given up wholly, that the work may be quite unselfish and disinterested.

Last of all Bhakti Yoga, the concentration of pious devotion, is recommended. Bhakti means pious devotion to the personally conceived Godhead:

Or [Samādhi is obtained] by devotion to God (Īśvara). . . . His manifestation is the syllable Om. *I, 23.*

Thus Bhakti Yoga, according to Patañjali, is pious worship of and personal devotion to Īśvara, the first personification of the Brahman. His manifestation is the syllable Om, the use of which is recommended also for the purposes of Bhakti Yoga:

The repetition of this [Om] and meditation on its meaning [is most important]. From this introspection is obtained removal of the obstacles [to Samādhi].  
*I, 28. 29.*

Introspection leads to the knowledge of the pure Self and thus to liberation. Thus also Patañjali teaches three kinds of Yoga, but he does not clearly distinguish them from one another, nor does he indicate what their mutual relations are. If we may understand the Sūtras literally as they stand, there are indeed three different ways, each of which leads to liberation.

### THE WAY OF LIBERATION IN THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ.

A similar state of things appears in the Bhagavadgītā. In this Karma Yoga, union with the Godhead through works, seems to be considered as the most important way to liberation:

Referring all actions to me with a mind fixed on the Self, free from expectation and from self-interest, engage in battle without any inward trouble. Those men who always adhere to this my doctrine, they, full of faith and free from fault-finding, obtain liberation even by their work. But they who find fault with my doctrine and do not obey it, know that they, destitute of all discrimination and foolish as they are, are completely lost.

*Bhagavadgītā III, 30—31.*

Here liberation by human work is taught without disguise. The works in question are the duties of every one according to his caste; for instance, for Arjuna it is the discharge of his duty as a warrior in battle. But this work must be referred or dedicated to the deity by renunciation, that is, the worker must renounce all gain and profit for himself. Similar ideas find expression in the conversation between Arjuna and Kṛishṇa in v, 1. 2:



O Kṛishṇa, thou praisest renunciation of works, and also their performance : tell me definitely, which of these two is better? Renunciation of works and performance of works, both lead to the highest goal : but of these two performance of works is better than the renunciation of works.

Here is the doctrine peculiar to the Bhagavadgītā, that the discharge of a man's duties in his ordinary calling is much superior to all asceticism and self-mortification and is at least as efficacious a means of liberation as that asceticism which renounces all work, in order to obtain the knowledge of the Absolute Self by pious meditation. It has been attempted to interpret this doctrine according to the ideas of the monistic Vedānta, but the meaning of the text is quite clear and unmistakable. Of course, this doctrine is much more in harmony with the requirements of practical life than the monistic doctrine of Śāṅkara and his successors. We may therefore understand why in our days the Bhagavadgītā is sedulously studied and still much more praised in India. But the doctrine is certainly not very philosophic. Śāṅkara's doctrine is far superior to it in philosophic consistency.

Bhakti Yoga is recommended in the Bhagavadgītā as a way to liberation :

He who knows this my might and powers as they in reality are, he obtains unwavering devotion. Of this there is no doubt. The wise, believing that I am the origin of all things and that every thing issues from me, full of love to me, directing their thoughts to me, devoting their lives to me, teaching each other and speaking of me, they are always contented and happy. To these, who are constantly devoted to me and who worship me with love, I give that concentration of their mind by which they will attain to me. In them alone, I, remaining in their hearts, out of compassion, destroy the darkness born of ignorance, with the bright lamp of knowledge. X, 7—11.

All these promises, the greatest of which is that of union with the Supreme Being, are given to the pious, who in love and worship devote themselves to Kṛishṇa. These are the characteristics of pious devotion in contradistinction to knowledge and works. This pious devotion is here extolled as the way to liberation. Of course, 'the lamp of knowledge' is added to it. The pious are at the same time the wise, because in aspiring after liberation they devote themselves to the service

of Kṛishṇa. In the opinion of the poet the way of devotion did not exclude the way of knowledge and of works in the pursuit of liberation.

Finally the Gītā also recommends wisdom or knowledge as a way to liberation:

Better than the sacrifice of property is the sacrifice of knowledge, O subduer of enemies; all work, O son of Prithā, is wholly consummated in knowledge (33). O learn thou that by reverence, questioning, and service. Men of knowledge, who discern the truth, will teach the knowledge (34). Having learnt knowledge, O descendant of Pāṇḍu, thou wilt not thus fall into confusion again; and by that thou wilt see all creatures first in thee and then in me (35). Even if thou wert the most sinful of all sinners, thou wouldst cross over all trespasses, alone in the boat of knowledge (36). Just as a kindled fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge reduces all works to ashes (37). For here [on earth] there is no means of purification equal to knowledge; and he who has reached perfection by devotion finds that in due time within himself (38). He who hath faith, who is intent upon it and whose senses are subdued, obtains knowledge. And having obtained knowledge, he will, without delay, reach the highest tranquillity (39).

*Bhagavadgītā IV, 33—39.*

'The sacrifice of knowledge' does not, of course, mean a *sacrificium intellectus*. On the contrary, knowledge itself is here called a sacrifice, because by it the Supreme Being is more honoured than by any other oblation. True knowledge, it is said, comprises all other sacrifices and all moral actions in it, because, according to the poet, it surpasses all the value of them. But to obtain this wisdom a man must go to a teacher, do him reverence and service, and by putting questions to him show his desire for instruction and request him to be initiated into the liberating knowledge. He who has obtained it realises the identity of his own Self with the Absolute Self, and therefore knows all the other creatures in himself, and himself in all the creatures. He will, therefore, no longer be troubled by the serious scruples which Kṛishṇa tried to remove from the mind of Arjuna. He knows that even death in battle cannot injure the human Self, which is identical with the Absolute Self, and therefore he will discharge the duty of a warrior without hesitation. Neither will his deeds bring hurt upon himself: the fire of knowledge immediately reduces them

to ashes and abolishes their consequences. As a preparation for the acquisition of liberating knowledge complete concentration (*yoga*) on pious devotion is mentioned in v. 38, and also faith or confidence, most probably in the teacher, in v. 39, and finally restraint of the senses from indulging in sensual pleasures. This way of knowledge then leads to the tranquillity of liberation without further delay.

The Bhagavadgītā thus, like the Yoga Sūtras, recommends three ways, all of which and each of which by itself leading to liberation. By means of ingenious interpretation it may be possible to reduce these three ways to the one way of knowledge or wisdom. But the poet had certainly no such intention. He praises each of the three ways as best in its place, which may be regarded as a poetical license. In one passage he offers quite a number of ways to liberation, without indicating their mutual relations:

Turn thy heart only to me, direct thy mind to me! Then thou shalt dwell in me hereafter; of this there is no doubt (8). But if thou art not able to direct thy mind steadily to me, then endeavour, O wealth-acquirer, to reach me by absorption in continuous meditation (9). If thou art not capable of continuous meditation, then be thou fully intent upon serving me with works (10). Even if thou performest works for my sake, thou shalt attain to perfection. If thou art also unable to do this, then take refuge in devotion to me, and subduing thyself, renounce the fruit of all works (11). For knowledge is better than continuous meditation, superior to knowledge is concentration, and renunciation of the fruit of works is superior to concentration; from renunciation tranquillity results immediately (12). *Bhagavadgītā XII, 8—12.*

If we distinguish wisdom in verse 12 and devout meditation in verse 8, we have here five ways to liberation, among which renunciation (*tyāga*) is extolled as superior to all, and is explicitly placed above knowledge. But as Kṛishṇa leaves it to Arjuna to choose among these different ways, it is evident that in the poet's opinion each of them leads by itself to liberation. The advocates of neo-Hinduism, therefore, are wrong in declaring in the *Brahmavādin* that the Bhagavadgītā, like the whole Vedānta school, teaches only the way of wisdom or knowledge, and that the other ways are only aids for the acquisition of wisdom. The popular view of the three ways,

of works, of devotion, and of wisdom, rests doubtless on the doctrine of the Bhagavadgītā and on that of the Yoga Sūtras.

### LIBERATION BY BHAKTI IN THE ŚĀṆḌILYA SŪTRAS.

The purest and strictest development of the doctrine of liberation by devotion (*bhakti*) is found in the Śāṇḍilya Sūtras<sup>1</sup>. The work consists of short aphorisms explicitly said to be based on the Bhagavadgītā and various other documents of popular religion (*Purāṇas*). These aphorisms are ascribed to the Vedic teacher Śāṇḍilya. They profess the doctrine of the Vedānta, but they do not give a monistic or Advaita interpretation to it, but belong to the so-called Viśiṣṭādvaita school, which advocates a theistically modified monism. In these aphorisms devotion (*bhakti*) is emphatically recommended as the most efficient means, nay as the only way of liberation. The author does not much concern himself with the nature of liberation: his whole interest centres in devotion as the means of liberation (*bhaktijñāsā*), Sūtra 1. With reference to the question concerning the nature of *bhakti* Sūtra 2 says:

In its highest form it is personal attachment to God.

It is here implied that there are also inferior kinds of devotion. They comprehend sacrifices and other religious works as well as Yoga asceticism. All these things, together with mere knowledge, the way of wisdom, are in the opinion of our author only means for obtaining true devotion (Sūtras 4—20). Also faith, which is inculcated and extolled in the Veda, must not be mistaken for devotion, for faith is subservient to ritual performances, which our author considers only as the pre-requisites of true devotion (Sūtras 24. 25).

The author himself says, Bhakti itself is personal attachment to God (*anurakti*). This appears particularly in Sūtra 6:

[That *bhakti* is personal attachment to God, follows] from the opposite of hatred and from the [Vedic] term 'taste'.

---

<sup>1</sup> Edited by I. R. Ballantyne, Calcutta 1861, translated by E. B. Cowell, Calcutta 1878.

In Bhagavadgītā xvi, 18 and Viṣṇu Purāṇa iv, 15, 12 hatred toward the god Kṛishṇa is mentioned as the opposite of Bhakti. The author rightly infers from this, that as hatred is a feeling of personal dislike, so Bhakti is a feeling of personal affection. And in the Veda, *i.e.*, the Taittirīya Upanishad, we read:

If he gets this taste, he is filled with joy.

Our author takes the word 'taste' to mean 'taste in the Brahman', that is, personal affection to the personally conceived Godhead, and 'joy' to mean the bliss of liberation in union with the personal Godhead. From these declarations it is evident, that Bhakti is more akin to the 'love of God' than to 'faith' in the Bible. But for this very reason it becomes more than doubtful whether sinful man is by himself capable of this Bhakti, the more so as its attainment, according to our author, absolutely pre-supposes the purification of the mind from sin, which indeed he makes it easy enough to obtain by the lower forms of devotion, but which in reality is far too difficult for man to bring about by himself.

It is a commendable feature in the teaching of our author that he makes his way to liberation accessible to all:

All, down to the despised castes, have a right to it, by meditation, as to the general truths. *Sūtra* 78.

Though the knowledge of liberation and the means of obtaining it are inseparably connected with the Veda, to which only the three Āryan castes have a claim, yet here the members of the Śūdra caste, nay, as the commentator emphatically declares, even the out-castes (*Chāṇḍāla* = Pariah) and even women are given the right to practise devotion and to obtain liberation from the sufferings of transmigration. This, however, cannot be obtained directly by study and listening to the Veda, but 'by meditation', *i.e.*, by making use of Purāṇa literature and similar sacred books of popular religion. Apart from this limitation the universalism of Bhakti is a point of contact with Christianity, which likewise makes salvation by faith accessible to all. At all events this doctrine of Bhakti is a very

important and forcible protest against ceremonial religion which had more and more degenerated into a mechanical and superstitious ritualism, and against the over-estimate of knowledge, that was prevalent in most of the philosophic schools. Our author and those who shared his opinions knew long before Schleiermacher and Ritschl that religion is a practical and not a theoretical concern of the human spirit.

#### OTHER INDIAN TEACHERS OF BHAKTI.

Several other great Indian teachers of ancient and modern times were earnest advocates of this form of religion. Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha, and above all Chaitanya preached liberation by devotion. What, *e. g.*, Chaitanya means by Bhakti is seen from some of his sayings:

"Thou art dear to my heart, thou art part of my soul," said a young man to his loved one; "I love thee, but why, I know not." So ought the worshipper to love Krishna and worship him for his sake only. Let him offer everything to God and expect no remuneration. He acts like a trader who asks for a return.<sup>1</sup>

According to Chaitanya Bhakti has five different modifications: (1) Śānti, calm contemplation of the Godhead; (2) Dāsya, active service, like that of a slave; (3) Sākhyā, a feeling of personal friendship; (4) Vātsalyā, a feeling of filial attachment, like that of children to their parents; (5) Mādhūryā, a tender affection, like that of a bride to her bridegroom. With this devotion, however, Chaitanya aspires after the same aim as the Vedānta monists, *i. e.*, annihilation of personal self-consciousness in ecstatic union with the Supreme Being. In this also those modern Hindus follow him, who, like Keshab Chander Sen, are really theists, and to some extent are imbued with Christian thoughts and sentiments. In our own days, Swāmi Vivekānanda preached the way of wisdom according to Śāṅkara with as much enthusiasm as Yoga asceticism in its threefold modification.

---

<sup>1</sup> Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 140.

## THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO THE VEDĀNTA.

The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools take exclusively the way of knowledge, little as they are concerned with purely religious questions. The Vedānta system, however, has undertaken to bring about the recognition of knowledge as the only way to liberation. And for this purpose the Vedānta schoolmen have adopted and embodied in their system whatever seemed useful in the other systems. In fact, the whole doctrine of the Uttara Mīmāṃsā has no other pretension than to be the only successful way to liberation. Its fundamental idea in this is, just as that of the Sāṅkhya, thoroughly consistent. If union with the impersonal Brahman is liberation, if there is no other *summum bonum* for man, and if the delusion of Avidyā, that the individual Self is different from the Absolute Self, is the only evil from which man is to be liberated, then liberation can only be brought about by the acquisition of that wisdom, which, together with the oneness and aloneness of all that exists, teaches also the identity of the individual soul with the Absolute Spirit. And we must also admit that the Vedānta schoolmen have succeeded in consistently and thoroughly unfolding and unifying the frequently undeveloped and heterogeneous ideas of the Upanishads concerning the way to liberation. Of course, this was not possible without the distinction being made between a lower and a higher, an exoteric and an esoteric knowledge. If the system is wrecked on this rock, then the doctrine of the Upanishads and the whole theory of liberation by knowledge must go with it.

## LIBERATION NOT BY WORKS.

According to Śāṅkara and the whole Vedānta school, liberation is obtained by knowledge, and this means first of all that liberation cannot be obtained by works. According to the principles of the Vedānta this is a matter of course. The works of man, be they good or bad, call for recompense and for new births, so that with them the gates are thrown open

to all the sufferings and pains of transmigration. Therefore the thought suggests itself that man may in the quickest and surest way obtain liberation by abstaining from all work in this life, so that there may be no material for the forming of another life in the body. But Śankara submits that this is by no means sufficient, for there might be fruits of works remaining from former births. Moreover, the soul, whose nature is to be both agent and enjoyer, can never be without works. This very nature of the soul, according to which it is agent and enjoyer, must be abolished by the knowledge of the Brahman. This cannot possibly be brought about by expiatory works, such as sacrifices and the like, because these works besides abolishing the fruits of sin, also produce merit, and thus must lead to new births. Another reason why works cannot bring about liberation is, that the latter is an incorporeal condition, unaffected by pleasure and pain; whereas works belong to bodily existence controlled by pleasure and pain, and therefore can have nothing to do with liberation. From the standpoint of the Vedānta, this is indeed an ingenious and just condemnation of works, in so far as religious ceremonies are concerned.

But moral actions find no more favour with Śankara. Nor does moral improvement, in his opinion, lead to liberation. The arguments for this assertion, as is often the case with Śankara, are very peculiar. All moral improvement, he assumes, is brought about by giving up faults and acquiring virtues, both of which are not conducive to liberation. For the latter is identity or rather homogeneousness (*svarūpatva*) with the Brahman, and it is impossible either to add perfection to, or take away faults from, this absolutely perfect being, which is and continues pure to all eternity. Śankara here pre-supposes that the Self which is to be liberated is already in possession of liberation. If this is not a false pre-supposition, it can be considered only as a monistic disguise, which would make the whole discussion concerning the way to liberation altogether superfluous. Finally, he says, moral improvement cannot purify the Self in the same way as a mirror may be cleansed



of dust, so as to shine in its full lustre. For it is impossible, he says, to influence a thing without bringing about changes in its nature. The Self, however, is eternal and unchangeable. But if it be said that the effort for moral purification has no reference to the Self, then the Self cannot be improved by it. Śankara here clearly evades the point. Clearing away the dust from a mirror is an operation which does not affect its nature, and the point is here the removal of such impurities as do not belong to the nature of the Self. In reality all this is deception. Śankara in his discussions continually substitutes the Absolute for the individual Self, and the former, of course, does not need liberation. From his point of view this is quite consistent. Absolute monism, which Śankara represents, requires no union of the Absolute with the individual Self; the mental realisation of their identity is quite sufficient. That this can be brought about neither by acts of worship nor by moral improvement is so obvious that it need not be proved.<sup>1</sup>

#### LIBERATION ONLY BY KNOWLEDGE.

Hence the positive thesis follows: Liberation is only obtained by knowledge. This knowledge is nothing more or less than the doctrine of the Vedānta. The latter is the guide to liberating knowledge. The way to liberation therefore includes also the pre-requisites for the communication of the Vedānta wisdom. Concerning these pre-requisites we read in Vedānta-sāra IV:

The qualified person is the possessor of right knowledge, that is, one who, by reading the Vedas and Vedāngas, according to rule, either in this life, or in a former one, has obtained a general idea of the meaning of the whole, — who, by performing the constant and the occasional rites, the penances and devotional exercises, and abstaining from things done with a desire of reward and from those forbidden, has got rid of all sin and so thoroughly cleansed his mind.

Here the gate to the temple of Vedānta wisdom is made very narrow. He who is not a Brahman after the fashion of

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, p. 484 ff.

remote antiquity, as a matter of course, cannot be admitted. The whole literary and religious education, which, even in those ancient times, in part remained a dead letter for the members of the Brahman caste, and which practically nobody possesses in our days, is here made the *conditio sine qua non*; to say nothing of the purification from all sins, which is to be achieved by man himself, and must therefore ever remain an unattainable ideal. Deussen is probably right in supposing that this rule was calculated to exclude the Śūdras from the study of the Vedānta, that is, from the acquisition of liberating knowledge. Deussen thinks that this is an exaggeration on the part of Ānandagiri unknown to Śankara. But Śankara was an orthodox Brahman, and the following passage of scripture quoted by the Vedāntasāra in support of the above rule was to him an unquestionable authority:

This Self Brahmins endeavour to know by Veda studies and sacrifices.

*Bṛihadār. Up. IV, 4, 22.*

The conclusion therefore is that Śankara quietly takes this condition as a matter of course.

Another postulate of the Vedāntasāra refers to the purification of the heart from all sins (iv): He who is qualified must have 'acquired the four means'. These four means are: (1) Discrimination between eternal and non-eternal substance (*nityānityavastuviveka*), the Brahman belonging to the first and all other things to the second class. (2) Indifference to the enjoyments and rewards here and hereafter (*ihāmutrāphalabhogavirāga*). Deussen has a particular predilection for this postulate, because it is in keeping with his bold idealistic speculation, which does not shrink from consequences. But it is nevertheless illusory, for no philosopher, whether European idealist or Indian Vedāntist, devotes himself to speculation from the mere pleasure of it. There is always in view not perhaps the 'reward' but at least 'the fruit' of obtaining the knowledge of absolute truth. And this is in itself a '*phalabhoga*' to which they neither can nor will be indifferent. But as Vedānta speculation, indeed, completely destroyed much

that was dear to the religious mind of that time, the Vedāntists had good reason to lay down that postulate. There is something in it of the absolute nihilism to which consistent Vedāntism must lead. (3) The possession of the six things (*ṣamādishaṭkam*), *i.e.*, quiescence, restraint, renunciation, patient endurance of the contrasts of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, *etc.*, concentration, confidence. These ascetical attainments are demanded from the pupil of Vedānta wisdom probably because they are supposed to protect him from the temptations and disturbances coming from the outward world, so that his mind may be able to devote itself to the contemplation of the Brahman. "Confidence" has no reference to the Supreme Being, but to the Vedānta teacher, whom the pupil is to believe implicitly. This condition is rather disagreeable to Deussen, for it discloses the fact that the Vedānta wisdom must be believed, *i.e.*, received as true, simply on the authority of the teacher. There is no other proof of its truth. (4) Desire for salvation (*mumukshatva*), a postulate which proves that this philosophy, in spite of its contempt for 'practical results', also has its practical purpose. Deussen declares this aim to be quite lawful, for it is the *raison d'être* of the Vedānta philosophy.

#### KNOWLEDGE BY THE GRACE OF GOD?

In this connection Śāṅkara, in accordance with Kena Up. II, 3, acknowledges that 'the knowledge of the Brahman does not depend on human works, but on the grace of God' (Deussen). The Upanishad passage reads as follows:

It is only thought by him to whom it is unthinkable, he that believes he thinks it, does not know it; to the intelligent it remains unintelligible; by the non-intelligent it is understood.

The purpose of this passage is in the first place to accentuate the necessary unknowableness of the Brahman: by the ordinary means and methods of human knowledge the Absolute Self is unknowable. But Śāṅkara takes occasion from this passage to speak of the 'grace', or rather of the

'good-will' and the 'blessing' of the Lord (*Īśvara*), by which, he says, the knowledge of the Brahman comes to man. But to speak in that way is only possible from the exoteric standpoint. From the esoteric point of view, which Śāṅkara represents with so much energy, and which alone is in accordance with truth, all such talk is futile. On this higher standpoint *Īśvara* is a mere personification of the absolutely impersonal Brahman. Grace can be ascribed neither to the former, who is only a delusive person, nor to the latter, which is no person at all. Śāṅkara might as well say, that the individual soul, which is identical with the Absolute Self, must obtain liberation by its own grace or good-will. It is altogether inconsistent for a transcendental monist of Śāṅkara's class to indulge in such futile talk. On the other hand his statement amounts to an admission that is most welcome to us: for here Śāṅkara admits indirectly that man cannot obtain liberation by his own reason and strength. This avowal occurs also in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the shrine of the heart of all beings, and by his miraculous power turns round all beings, as puppets mounted upon a machine — Take thy refuge with him, O descendant of Bharata; by his grace thou shalt attain to the highest tranquillity, to the eternal seat.

*Bhagavadgītā XVIII, 61. 62.*

Śāṅkara feels that this doctrine is opposed to the Vedānta, and therefore asks, "What about the homogeneousness of God and the soul? Does it exist, or does it not exist?" And he answers:

It does exist, but it is hidden; ignorance conceals it. But if a creature meditates on the Supreme Being and aspires after it, that homogeneousness is revealed in him in whom the grace of God accomplishes it, but never by itself, just as the faculty of vision becomes manifest in a blind man after his blindness has been removed by means of medicines. For God as cause effects the bondage and the liberation of the soul: bondage, if the reality of God is not known, and liberation, if it is known.

Here again esoteric wisdom and exoteric conceptions are mixed as in a whirlpool without the least attempt of harmonising them. If the Supreme Being is the sole cause of

everything, why does it bind souls according to such a cruel law which is supposed to recompense works for which the individual Self is really not responsible? And why does it not, in virtue of its absolute omnipotence, immediately liberate those souls? Nothing, not even its own law, can prevent the Supreme Being from doing so. And if everything depends on the grace of the Supreme Being, why the assiduous endeavours of Śankara and his school to acquire the liberating knowledge? Moreover, the Supreme Being is either personal or impersonal. It cannot be both at the same time. If impersonal, the individual Self may be homogeneous to and identical with it, but then it is inconsistent and untrue to talk of grace and favour. Or it is personal, and the human soul is different from it. Then it would be consistent to speak of grace and kindness, but it will be absolutely hopeless to seek liberation in union with the personal Supreme Being by the way of knowledge alone. This constant uncertainty and oscillation between the exoteric and esoteric doctrines only tends to reveal the inconsistency and untenability of Vedāntic monism.

#### KNOWLEDGE NOT AN ADDITION TO THE WAY OF WORKS.

According to Śankara's chief proposition concerning liberation, the latter is only obtained by knowledge, which in itself, apart from all works, is perfectly sufficient for liberation. But concerning this Śankara now allows an opponent to raise the objection that knowledge is only an addition to the way of works, serving to prove the immortality of the soul, without which the doctrine of recompense would come to nothing. Śankara replies that the Vedānta not only teaches the continued existence of the individual soul in transmigration, but also the Absolute Self, which is not subject to transmigration:

This knowledge is no impulse for works, on the contrary, it abolishes them.

For thus it is said in Īśa Up. 2:

If a man here engages in works, he may wish to live a hundred years; with thee it is even as I say and not otherwise: to this man work does not cling.

The wise man may perform works as long as he likes,—they will not stain him, and their consequences do not cling to him. He is even now experiencing (*anubhavārūḍha*) union with the Supreme Being, and that is the only effect of his knowledge. The latter does not ripen its fruits only in the future, as is the case with works. This is, of course, an unproved and unprovable assertion. For the transcendental, Absolute Self is inaccessible to experience, and Śankara himself must admit that the death of man is necessary for real union with the Brahman. That experience, therefore, is only a fictitious imagination. Moreover, Śankara supports his statement that works can no longer harm the sage, by the further assertion that the world (*prapañcha*), which is the scene and cause of works, is merely a product of ignorance. For him, who has attained to the knowledge of the Brahman, he says, the world together with works disappears altogether. In other words, the doctrine of transmigration is a delusive conception which is used as a scarecrow to frighten the ignorant. Why is it not frankly acknowledged that in reality there is no such thing as transmigration?

#### KNOWLEDGE ITSELF NOT A WORK.

Finally, according to Śankara, knowledge itself is not to be looked upon as action. Action is always a product of will and therefore more or less subject to the option of the agent. But knowledge does not depend on the option of man, but only on the nature of the object to be known. In receiving knowledge man can only allow things to act upon him, he cannot act upon them. So it is with the knowledge of the Absolute Self, which only arises, when the Self reveals itself to man. As this knowledge is no work and not in any way dependent on man, he cannot be commanded to acquire it. The exhortations

to do so, which so frequently occur in the Upanishads, are, according to Śankara, not inculcations of a duty, but a means of turning the thoughts of men away from visible things and directing them to the Brahman, the object of knowledge. The knowledge of the Brahman can neither be found by seeking, nor can it be avoided, when it dawns upon the soul. Śankara remarks triumphantly in commenting on *Brahma Sūtra* 1, 1, 4 :

That is our glory (ornament) that, when the comprehension of the Brahman is obtained, every obligation to work ceases, and everything that was to be accomplished is accomplished. As the scripture says : When a man comprehends the Self, so that he knows, 'I am the Self', — with what desire, for what purpose, will he fret for the body ?

#### BY TRUE KNOWLEDGE ALONE.

"By knowledge alone", such is the answer given by Śankara and the whole Vedānta school to the question concerning the attainment of liberation. But how is this liberating knowledge then to be obtained ? Here Śankara first of all declares emphatically, that liberating knowledge is really the knowledge of man's own Self, of his true nature, as it is always hidden behind the delusive vestures of ignorance. So the whole thing amounts to removing these vestures of ignorance, in order to let the sun of knowledge arise. As Śankara says in *Ātmabodha* 42 :

When once the darkness of the soul is dispelled by knowledge, as night at sunrise, then the eternal Self is revealed by itself, as the sun rises in its glory.

Śankara in this connection lays stress on the fact that knowledge is not the development of man into what he was not before, and that it cannot be obtained by religious performances ; for the Absolute Self as such is in itself the subject of all knowledge in the individual self, and as such it is unknowable. Ordinary knowledge, the knowledge of the empiric world, must therefore cease completely, so that there may be room for the highest, for liberating knowledge. The knowledge of scriptural doctrine is also among the forms of knowledge which must be given up, for although that knowledge

directs men's thoughts to the Absolute Self, it is yet insufficient to produce the only valuable knowledge of the Brahman. The Absolute Self can only by itself produce the knowledge of itself in man. Compare Kāth. Up. II, 23 (above, p. 475), which Śāṅkara adduces.

This Self then is nothing but our own Self in its own innermost nature. In the lower Brahmanvidyā, however, it appears as Īśvara, the first personification of the Absolute Brahman. And Śāṅkara says again that liberating knowledge is a gift of grace from Īśvara. He thus abstains from an explanation, consistent with the strict monistic standpoint, of the manner in which liberating knowledge is obtained. Deussen also acknowledges that Śāṅkara declares emphatically that the Absolute Self is beyond the range of cause and effect and that therefore it is impossible to say by what cause the knowledge of the Brahman is effected. In other words, Śāṅkara cannot explain and does not know the origin of liberating knowledge. At this critical point his Vedānta wisdom fails him. But he who preaches liberation by knowledge is in duty bound to explain to us how this knowledge arises. Śāṅkara's excuse can but poorly hide this defect. As we have seen, the Brahman, according to his doctrine, is itself the absolute cause, and so he himself applies to the Brahman the category of cause and effect. But allowing this Absolute to be beyond the category of cause and effect, the same cannot be said with regard to the origin of its knowledge. Where there is an origin, there must also be cause and effect. And Śāṅkara by abstaining from giving an explanation unconsciously admits the insufficiency of the Vedānta.

#### THE MEANS OF OBTAINING TRUE KNOWLEDGE.

Śāṅkara gets entangled in another self-contradiction; for having shown in detail that knowledge cannot be attained by any means imaginable, he proceeds to answer the question concerning the means by which the knowledge of the Brahman



may be obtained. The means he mentions are works and meditation. This, to some extent, agrees with what we have seen above with regard to the pre-requisites for the study of the Vedānta. By works Śāṅkara here means religious performances, such as sacrifices, ceremonies, *etc.*, which are sometimes highly valued in the Upanishads, though they are also occasionally condemned. Of course, liberation itself is not attained by works, neither are they of any further importance for him for whom the sun of knowledge has risen; but, according to Śāṅkara, they are a means of obtaining knowledge. He may have felt himself that this is opposed to his whole system and to his statements quoted above; but his hands are bound by the Upanishads. Therefore he surrounds his assertion that works are a means to obtain knowledge with all kinds of warnings and restrictions. Those religious works, he says, do not really produce knowledge, else they would produce liberation, which is simply the knowledge of the Brahman. But liberation cannot be produced by any means. Works, on the contrary, only co-operate (*sahakārin*) in the acquisition of knowledge in so far as they preserve him who performs them from the sufferings and impediments of passion and sensuality. They have, therefore, no meritorious, only an ascetic significance. But how can Śāṅkara from his standpoint make such an arbitrary restriction? Are not all works without exception subject to the law of recompense? And even as aids to knowledge they are not absolutely necessary. Especially for the poor, who naturally cannot afford to lead the life of an ascetic, he allows prayer, fasting, and pious worship of the gods as sufficient. But the grace of knowledge may also be obtained by works performed during former births, whereby, of course, grace at once becomes merit. Śāṅkara often forgets his own assertions, as when he says that knowledge, as the fruit of those aids, is obtained in this or in a future life on earth. In this life, if the consequences of works performed in former births are not too strong for it; otherwise liberating knowledge will dawn upon man only in a future birth. The

Bhagavadgītā also says that the liberating knowledge is only obtained step by step:

Having been purified of his sins and having attained perfection after many births, he reaches the highest goal. *Bhagavadgītā VI, 45.*

Thus the advocate of the most absolute monism finally descends again to the inferior exoteric standpoint, which is a repeated proof of the fact that ideal monism sometimes becomes untenable.

The second aid for obtaining knowledge, according to Śankara, is meditation, which he recommends also in the Ātmabodha (41):

Thus the churning stick of meditation having been constantly turned in the wood of the spirit, the flame of knowledge will arise and consume all the fuel of ignorance.

What is intended here is devout meditation on the Brahman or on the Upanishad passages dealing with it. This meditation, of course, includes the act of realising the Brahman in the mind of him who engages in meditation. And Śankara, at some length, discusses the question whether such realisation has to be accomplished only once or repeatedly. His answer is, that the realisation of the Brahman is to be repeated till the vision of it comes on, as the thrashing of corn is continued till all the grains are thrashed out. Similarly he says in Ātmabodha (16):

The pure Self which dwells within must be distinguished from the body and other vestures, by constant pious meditation, as rice is thrashed out of its husks.

It is a matter of course that repeated realisation is not necessary for him who on hearing for the first time the great saying "*Tattvam asi* = that art thou" immediately comprehends the identity of his own Self with the Brahman. But to those who are slow of comprehension, Śankara recommends repetition.

But now to Śankara himself the doubt arises, whether a man will ever be able to fully comprehend that doctrine.

Even the most consistent monist, who considers everything except the Brahman as a false delusion, cannot overcome the feeling of pain. But Śankara cannot admit this. He assumes that the feeling of pain is itself a delusion, as if a man whose children or friends suffer, imagines he suffers himself. The body, together with its pain, is quite outside the sphere of true existence, of the Absolute Self, wherefore in dreamless sleep, where only, according to Śankara, the Self exists in its pure and true nature, every feeling of pain and suffering ceases. The liberating knowledge is that by which a man recognises his own Self as a spiritual entity, free from all suffering, as the griefless, blissful, Absolute Self. Of course, this is not a proof of the assertion that the feeling of pain is a mere delusion to which no reality corresponds. It is rather a dogmatic decree: the exigencies of the monistic standpoint demands it, therefore it must be believed. But in opposition to this the realist point of view will always maintain its own position. There is really no proof of Śankara's assumption that the feeling of pain is mere delusion, and that the individual Self is identical with the Absolute Self.

This is at once evident from a further doubt of Śankara. How is it possible to conceive the identity of the absolute with the individual Self, seeing that the latter is involved in the evil of transmigration, and the former is absolutely free from it? If the Absolute Spirit is the individual soul, it is not free from suffering and therefore cannot be the Absolute Spirit; and if the individual soul is to be the Absolute Spirit, it must be free both from the duty of fulfilling the Vedic ordinances, and from suffering; but evidently neither the one nor the other is the case. Śankara answers this objection simply by quoting some of the numerous Upanishad passages in which the individual soul is declared to be the Supreme Being. We must therefore simply believe the Upanishads that the absolute and the individual Self are identical, though good reasons and direct experience contradict these assertions. We must also believe the proof of this, consisting in Śankara's assertion that

the absolute and the individual Self are not different, that the seeming difference of the two is mere illusion. As for the duties prescribed in the Veda, they last only till the time of awakening; with the awakening of knowledge they cease:

There the father is no longer a father, the Vedas are no longer Vedas.

*Br̥hadār. Up. IV, 3, 22.*

Deussen sums up Śankara's discussion very impressively as follows:

"But who then is the unawakened man?"

"Thou who askest the question."

"But I am God, according to the Scripture doctrine."

"If thou knowest that, then thou art awakened, and then there is no one unawakened any more (*na asti kasyachid aprabodha*)."

Śankara and Deussen forget that such assumptions, opposed as they are to all experience, to all sense of truth, and to all moral sentiment in man, do not become true by bold repetition. Nor can Deussen's quotation from his own "Elements of Metaphysics" prove the truth of that fantastic doctrine. It cannot be proved, nor can it be comprehended by a thinking mind, it may only be taken upon trust, or rather be appropriated by the mystic enthusiasm of an ecstatic, *i. e.*, by a psychologically absolutely inferior condition of mind.

This pious meditation on the Brahman with the help of the Upanishad texts, according to Śankara, leads to liberation. He further discusses the posture of the body during those ascetic exercises, a thing already known to us from quotations from the later Upanishads and the Yoga Sūtras. On the whole, according to Śankara, it is not very important. With regard to the points of the compass, place, and time, he says, care must only be taken that the undisturbed devotion of the mind to meditation be not prevented, but rather promoted. In summing up the results of this devout meditation as liberating knowledge, Śankara<sup>1</sup> shows once again, what we know already,

---

<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, p. 450.

that in spite of all his insisting on the way of knowledge as the only way, he has yet to say a word of approval for the way of devotion (*bhakti*) as identical with the way of the fathers and the way of the gods. For, those devout meditations which according to absolute monism lead directly to the knowledge of the one Brahman, come to an end when this knowledge arises. But those religious exercises which aim at happiness in this world and move on those two paths must be continued till death. For the life after death, *i.e.*, the attainment of the heavenly worlds with the Brahman-world, depends on the conceptions of the soul at the moment of death, according to Bṛihadār. Up. iv, 4, 6. Besides we have seen before, that Śankara hopes, the pious man who, in virtue of his piety, at first goes to the world of the gods or of the Brahman, will by the time of the next universal dissolution have acquired in those heavenly spheres the knowledge of liberation. But even without it he would, with the rest of the world, by the whirl of dissolution be absorbed in the Brahman.

If we finally review the statements concerning the way of liberation in the documents of philosophic Hinduism, we must first of all state that philosophic Hinduism has not succeeded in producing a homogeneous, consistent view of the matter. In the Upanishads the old way of sacrificial works partly stands side by side with the way of knowledge, and occasionally it comes in for the unsparing criticism of those who think they possess a better knowledge. Then also Yoga asceticism appears, which might perhaps be made part of the way of knowledge, as an aid in the pursuit of knowledge, though originally it clearly represents an independent method of reaching the Supreme Being and union with it, a method that agrees better with practical religion than the critical method of the Sāṅkhya. In the Bhagavadgītā we find quite a number of ways, sometimes inconsistent, *e.g.* the way of works and that of wisdom or knowledge. The only consistent way is that of knowledge, according to the monistic Vedānta of Śankara's school. But even this way is so only theoretically. For the principal

proposition is that the individual and the Absolute Self being identical, only this knowledge of their identity is necessary for liberation. All the other ways suffer from the defect that they are not in accordance with the *summum bonum* to which they aspire. Perhaps some consistency may be acceded to the endeavours of the Yoga school to bring about ecstasy, in which to obtain union with the pure Self. But the attempt of obtaining union with the impersonal Godhead either by moral work, or by performing religious ceremonies, or by the devout worship of one particular deity, is from the standpoint of philosophic Hinduism inconsistent and hopeless. From the standpoint of philosophic Hinduism Śāṅkara will always triumph over those doubtful attempts to find a way to liberation. For the way of liberation must be in accordance with the nature of liberation and with the nature of the Supreme Being, union with which is liberation.

But Śāṅkara is not always consistent in his exposition of the way to liberation. He allows the works which he first rejects to enter the temple of wisdom again by more than one backdoor. From his exoteric point of view he is even inclined to recognise the way of devotion. Moreover, in explaining the way of knowledge, he is involved in self-contradiction. He cannot indicate the origin of liberating knowledge, although this is the all-important question. Contrary to his own doctrine he declares this knowledge to be given to man by the grace of Īśvara, and at the same time he says it is a fruit of man's own works. If he, with divine assurance, knew himself in possession of divine truth for eternal salvation, he would not vacillate like this. His vacillation shows that his wisdom is unable to reveal the way of true salvation. Of such wisdom it is said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise" (1 Cor. I, 19). As a monist Śāṅkara has, however, himself brought about the destruction of his wisdom, for that is implied in liberation, as conceived by Śāṅkara. We have shown that the liberation, that is the *summum bonum* of philosophic Hinduism, is simply annihilation.

## II. THE WAY OF SALVATION IN CHRISTIANITY.

### 1. ITS DIVINE PREPARATION.

The supreme good of Christianity is the fellowship of man with the living God. But between man and the holy God sin stands as a wall of partition. As God is only one and the Creator of all, so also the highest good of salvation, the kingdom of God, is intended for all. But if there is to be real, true fellowship between God and man, the barrier of sin must be removed. It is, however, impossible for man to accomplish this. For sin is to be considered as the debt of a life spent in disobedience to God's will. And neither future self-improvement, nor future good works, even if man could perform them, can be taken into consideration for the payment of such a debt. For man with his whole life, with all his strength and time, is in duty bound to lead a life of righteousness and holiness in the service of God. There can be no supererogatory merit in the future with which to pay off the debts of the past. But experience also reveals the indubitable fact that man, after having spent part of his life in sin, cannot lead a life pleasing to God by his own strength, before he has become a partaker of the divine grace of salvation as embodied in the kingdom of God. Sin is such a power in him that with him there may be power to will but not to do that which is good. If man in his own strength attempts his own moral self-improvement—for moral regeneration is quite out of the question—he will only displace one sin by another; in the place of gross moral transgressions the sins of pride and vanity will insinuate themselves, which are only more subtle manifestations of the same radical evil. If man had to depend on his own resources for the removal of sin which separates

him from God and His fellowship, he would be for ever excluded from the supreme good, the kingdom of God.

Therefore the first gift which God causes to be offered in the preaching of the kingdom of God is forgiveness of sin. In prophecy it is announced as the foundation of the New Covenant, and by Christ it is offered as the fundamental gift of salvation. The risen Christ commands "repentance and remission of sins" to be proclaimed in his name (Luke xxiv, 46. 47). And now the only question is, how is remission of sins to be obtained? It is in the nature of things, and the whole Bible declares, that it is brought about by a special divine dispensation, by which the way to fellowship with God is prepared and laid open.

#### OLD TESTAMENT ATONEMENT FOR SIN.

Already the Old Covenant of God with His people rested on a sacrifice: "He sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord" (Ex. xxiv, 5). The second kind of sacrifices named here are not regular expiatory offerings, but are called "peace offerings", because they were connected with sacrificial feasts, in which the fellowship of God with His people appeared outwardly, as it were in the form of commensality. The burnt offerings, however, are certainly means of expiation and atonement. This appears from the act of blood sprinkling, which always involves the idea of atonement: "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Ex. xxiv, 8). The act of receiving Israel into the covenant of God, therefore, was a sacrifice of expiation, by which the people received remission of sin and atonement, in the way possible in, and agreeing with, the Old Testament stage of the covenant. And it was only by this remission and atonement that the people were admitted to, and kept in, fellowship with the holy God. The subsequent sacrifices, whose order



is described in the three middle ones of the five books of Moses are intended as means not of establishing, but of sustaining the covenant between God and His people. As far as they come into play here they are to atone for the sins of the people and its leaders committed by weakness and error, because these sins also call the covenant in question, and therefore it must be restored again. The atoning feature of these sacrifices lies in the fact that God, according to his ordinance of grace, takes the life of the sacrificed animal, which must be offered to God in its blood, or any other gift which He accepts instead of this life, for the forfeited life of the sinner. The sacrifices therefore have their expiatory significance not in themselves, but only in virtue of the divine ordinance, according to which they are offered. This repeated, and sometimes regularly recurring, oblation was a startling exposure of human sin, and an indication of their own imperfect and limited significance.

Through them the idea of spiritual sacrifices and with it the knowledge that these are really the offerings pleasing to God, appears already in the Old Testament:

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit :

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. *Ps. LI, 17.*

#### THE PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR SIN PROMISED.

This is an incontestable testimony of the fact that the object of the Old Testament sacrifices is chiefly to bring about knowledge of sin and repentance. But the most remarkable thing is that Old Testament prophecy in one of its most prominent representatives draws the picture of the meek, patient and suffering servant of Jehovah, who by His very suffering is to bring a perfect sacrifice for the atonement of His people. Modern criticism may again and again refer this most remarkable picture to Jeremiah, or to some other prophet, or to the god-fearing part of the nation: whenever we read that wonderful 53rd chapter of Isaiah, we cannot but refer all that is said in it of

the servant of Jehovah to that most perfect sacrifice on Golgotha. The suffering of the servant of Jehovah, as described in this chapter, is explicitly stated to be an atoning sacrifice:

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand” (Is. LIII, 10).

What we would emphasize here in the first place is, that in this sacrificial suffering the holy will of God is carried out: it pleased Him, Jehovah Himself, to bruise him, and it is He also who consecrates or appoints the soul, that is the life of this innocent sufferer as a sacrifice for sin. And the second point is, that the death thus ordained by God is explicitly stated to be a ‘guilt-offering’ (Lev. v, 6 ff.). The ‘guilt-offering’ was that kind of sacrifice in which, in the form of restitution always connected with an expiatory act in the sanctuary, the idea of atonement appeared strongest and most prominent. Whereas in the sacrificial precepts features of quantitative restitution cling to the idea of atonement, they are completely abandoned in the absolutely qualitative, *i.e.*, ethical estimation of the pious, God-pleasing servant and his deep suffering. It is, moreover, to be seen from the general tenor of the chapter that his suffering means an absolutely vicarious suffering, atoning for the sin of the people. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is. LIII, 4, 5). Nor is the outlook on the consummation of the kingdom of God wanting. The ‘pleasure of the Lord’ which shall prosper through the instrumentality of His servant, after offering the sacrifice of his life, is the kingdom of God. In the accomplishment of this work of God He shall “deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high” (Is. LII, 13). We may simply say, the servant of Jehovah, by “justifying many” (Is. LIII, 11) in virtue of his atoning sacrifice, opens to them the entrance to

the kingdom of God. Thus also here the Old Testament in full consciousness and with strong emphasis points beyond its own means and ordinances of atonement to a time when they will be fulfilled and replaced by a perfect, morally sufficient sacrifice for sin.

### THE PERFECT SACRIFICE IN CHRIST'S DEATH.

According to the New Testament we can find this sacrifice for the reconciliation of the world with God and for the opening of the way to His fellowship only in Christ's suffering and death on the cross. He himself says this, in words few in number, but weighty in meaning. Once when the mother of the sons of Zebedee asked him to confer on her sons the highest places of honour in the kingdom of God, to the right and to the left of the Messiah, and the rest of the disciples were indignant at this, Jesus reproved them and said they should not aspire after places of honour: true greatness in his kingdom consisted in humble service. And in this he himself took the lead: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matth. xx, 28). His whole life was a service rendered to men. His work in proclaiming and establishing the kingdom of God on earth, his teaching and his miraculous works, were the highest service which mankind stood in need of: by it he was to reveal and to offer to all men the supreme good of salvation. He knew at that time, that his violent death was imminent and he had announced it more than once. If at such a juncture he says he will give his life in the service he was rendering to mankind, every Israelite must, from his acquaintance with the sacrificial language of his religion, understand that Jesus considered his death as a sacrifice. For in the Old Testament sacrifices a life, or a 'soul', was offered to God in the blood of the victim. But his sacrifice, he says, will be 'a ransom for many'. Ransom, in sacrificial language, means atonement. By the

sacrifice of his life in his death many will be made free, the fetters of the guilt of their sins being unloosed.

There can be no doubt as to the person to whom the ransom is to be paid. All men are bondmen to God on account of the guilt of their sins. By Christ's sacrifice offered in his service of love and obedience to his heavenly Father, the many become free. The sacrifice of his life in his sufferings and death, therefore, is a thing pleasing and valuable to God on account of which the many are delivered from their bondage, *i.e.*, receive the forgiveness of their sin. The idea of a vicarious, atoning sacrifice is thus distinctly stated here by Christ himself, who had to offer the sacrifice, and certainly we may believe that he knew its meaning best.

Only once more Jesus, according to the gospels, speaks of the significance of his death. It was in the night before his death, and in connection with an act which his disciples could not easily forget and to which he himself had given a lasting significance in the congregation of his followers. Matth. xxvi, 26—28; Mark xiv, 22—24; Luke xxii, 19—20; 1 Cor. xi, 23—25. These four documents in their account of the event agree in all essential points. Here we are not concerned with the Christian doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but only with the question as to what may be gathered from the act and the words of Jesus related here concerning the significance of his death. In that memorable night Christ took the bread that was before him, gave thanks for it, broke it into pieces, and gave it to them, saying: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you." To the Jew, bread is the chief food for his bodily life. Thus Jesus gives his body as food for his disciples, which of course must not be understood in a grossly material, but in a spiritual sense. For this end his body must be broken in his death, just as he broke the bread before them. Thus broken, the body of Christ, or his person, having passed through death, is for the spiritual life of his disciples what bread is for their bodily life, *i.e.*, food for their souls, as Jesus had said once before: "I am the bread of life."

But he had then emphatically declared that in order to be the bread of life he must suffer death and offer up his blood. So also here. After having distributed the bread Jesus took the cup, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" or as Luke has it: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you." Whereas the gift of his body means, above all, eternal life in the fellowship with God, the gift of the cup indicates how this fellowship is made possible. As the Old Covenant rested on an atoning sacrifice, so also the blood of Jesus, which he must shed in his death, will be the foundation of a new covenant, *viz.*, the one promised by the prophets, which has for its basis the forgiveness of sins brought about by his sufferings and death. We do not read our own ideas into these words, but only try to understand them in their true meaning, if here also we find a vicarious sacrifice for the atonement of human sin. Only the atoning sacrifice of his suffering and death opens the way to fellowship with God, which is eternal life. It is impossible to say this more briefly and correctly than it is done by Jesus himself in those glorious words: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but through me" (John xiv, 6). He is the way to the Father: through him alone men can have fellowship with God, true eternal life, and in it the full, real truth of God. Expressed in the language of our own time and in connection with our subject it means simply that in him the supreme good is given to us, and that only through his instrumentality on account of his atoning suffering and death we may obtain this supreme good.

#### THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL ON CHRIST'S DEATH.

We have yet to consider the testimony of the apostles concerning the significance of the death of Jesus, which in its essential features is quite in harmony with what he says himself. In the epistle to the Romans (III, 25 ff.) St. Paul says

that God set forth Jesus as a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, that God might himself be just, and the justifier of him that has faith in Jesus. If Jesus is set forth as a propitiation in his blood, his violent death on the cross is an atoning sacrifice for sinners. On account of this atoning sacrifice God is now both the just and the justifier. He is enabled to justify sinners, to forgive their sins, and receive them into his fellowship, and yet at the same time to maintain his own justice, so as to remain true to himself and his dispensation. For with St. Paul justification stands in the closest connection with the atonement, *i. e.*, the union of God with men in personal fellowship and the adoption of men as children of God. All this, however, is not an abstract idea or a monistic formula, according to which God will regulate his dealings with sinners, but it is embodied in the person of Jesus, who is here distinctly said to be set forth to the world as the crucified and risen Christ. We may say that by his sufferings and death he became a propitiation, but by his resurrection he was set forth as such to the world. It is the crucified and risen Christ, now elevated as Lord to the throne of God, through whom sinners receive the gift of justification and admission to the grace of life in fellowship with God. He is the way to the supreme good of salvation.

St. Paul says the same in the second epistle to the Corinthians, where, however, he traces the atonement back to its ultimate cause and gives it still more pointed expression. According to 2 Cor. v, 18—21, the fact that man is made a new creation comes from God, as its ultimate cause or rather its personal originator. It is He himself also who has reconciled those who believe in Christ unto himself, and has entrusted the apostle and his fellow-workers with the ministry of reconciliation and the preaching of Christ. This is in accordance with the fact that God in Christ made arrangements for, or was accomplishing a work the purpose of which was, the reconciliation of the world unto God. This purpose is accomplished by means of two things: by not reckoning unto men their trespasses, and

by having committed the word of reconciliation to the apostles. God, therefore, is the originator of the reconciliation of the world unto God; reconciliation is not the work of man but of God alone.

The divine work on the basis of which men are called to reconciliation with God, is thus described by the apostle: "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v, 21). He to whom sin, either by his own deeds, or by its insinuation into his innermost thoughts, sentiments and volitions, was absolutely unknown, is of course Jesus. Him God made to be sin on our behalf, *i. e.*, not exactly in our place, but for our good. The words of the apostle were sometimes understood as meaning that God made Christ a 'sin-offering' for us, as the word for sin in the Old Testament may also mean 'sin-offering' in the technical sense of the term. But this is quite contrary to the terminology of the whole New Testament and also of the Greek Old Testament; and this attempt must now be considered as having completely failed.

What the apostle means to say is, God treated Jesus as if he had been sin or the embodiment of sin itself. Sin is the moral condition of man; and just as if this sinful condition of man had been incorporated in the person of Jesus, God caused the judgement of sin to fall upon him, so that he had to suffer what was due to our sinful condition. This at all events implies the idea of vicarious suffering. But the active subject of the act being not Jesus, the son of man, but God Himself, the conception of sacrifice has no place in the context. The substance of a vicarious atoning sacrifice, however, is there. The purpose of this sacrifice is that we sinners should become the righteousness of God in him. Righteousness of God means the righteousness which God gives us. The state into which we are to enter in virtue of the atoning suffering of Christ is to correspond to the full measure of righteousness which God alone can give to man. In other words, the sinners, for whom Christ bore the judgement of sin,

are to be considered as perfectly righteous before God. This, however, is possible only "in him", the only perfectly righteous one, who in his work, his sufferings, and his death on the cross so gloriously proved his obedience to God, his love towards men, his whole God-pleasing character. To be perfectly righteous in him means to be acceptable and reconciled to God and received into his personal fellowship. Thus also here Jesus Christ by his atoning sacrifice is the way to the supreme good through whom we are admitted into personal fellowship with God.

Many more testimonies for this might be adduced from the epistles of St. Paul. But it may suffice to quote one more saying of his, which emphasizes the divine preparation and the personal character of this way to the supreme good of salvation: "But of him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i, 30). That those who believe in Christ are incorporated in him as his members, is here said to be the work of God, wherefore it is not an achievement of man, of which he might boast. But to those who are attached to and embodied in him, Jesus Christ has become wisdom from God, *i. e.*, the saving knowledge of God. St. Paul accentuates this in contra-distinction to worldly wisdom, by which some among the Corinthian Christians were in danger of being intoxicated. Jesus Christ is wisdom from God, by being our righteousness, because in him we have forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God; by being our sanctification, because his divine life destroys sin in us and causes the new man to grow and develop in us according to his own image; and by being our redemption, because even now he delivers us from the guilt and power of sin, and at last will deliver us from all evil and admit us into his eternal kingdom. The same thing, only somewhat different in form, we read in 1 Tim. ii, 4—6: "Who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between



God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."

### THE TESTIMONY OF ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN.

The apostle Peter also speaks of 'the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter I, 2). Coming as it does from a Jewish Christian, grown up in the school of the Old Testament, this can only mean an atoning sacrifice; the sprinkling of blood was always the real act of expiation. The apostle means the same thing, when he says that Christ suffered for us and 'bore our sins in his body upon the tree', *i.e.*, he allowed the judgement of our sins to fall upon him, 'that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed' (1 Peter II, 21—24). We see that St. Peter also considers Christ's suffering and death on the cross as a sacrifice atoning for our sins, that they might be blotted out and we, being justified, might become partakers in the fellowship of God.

The apostle John directly says that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, emphasizing at the same time the personal character of it: "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the whole world" (1 John II, 1. 2). The intercession which Jesus Christ makes with God for sinners is just the representation of the atonement, which is embodied in him, and which the apostle undoubtedly recognised in the suffering and death of Jesus. Therefore he can now say to his readers: "I write unto you, my little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John II, 12) and, "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John V, 20). That Jesus Christ is our eternal life, and that we have eternal life only in his fellowship, but have it there, in reality and truth, is a fact often emphasized by St. John. But he in whose person such great, glorious, and truly divine things are given to us, cannot be

simply one of our own kind, but he who has come from the Father as His only begotten son, full of grace and truth. There is indeed no higher security than this for the fact that he is for us the way to the supreme good of the kingdom of God.

#### THE TESTIMONY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

It is only a difference of conception not of substance, if the author of the epistle to the Hebrews represents Jesus Christ, the son of God, as our high priest, who entered into the heavenly sanctuary behind the veil, for the purpose of atoning for our sins with his own blood, *i.e.*, with the atoning results of his obedient sufferings and death, in which he 'through the eternal spirit' offered himself to God as an offering 'without blemish', *i.e.*, as a perfect sacrifice (Hebr. ix, 14 and in many other places). The author doubtless considers this offering as an atoning sacrifice, for, in writing on these things, his eyes are turned to the great propitiatory sacrifice on the annual Day of Atonement. But as Christ is both priest and sacrificial lamb, so his atoning sacrifice is embodied personally in him, the eternal high priest as an eternal redemption.

In this sense the author says in chapter x, 19—21: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God" etc. In the blood of Jesus Christ God has, through the veil of Christ's flesh, dedicated, *i.e.*, opened for us a way, untrodden before, living, efficacious, and leading to the goal. His flesh, that is, his earthly life as a man, was, as it were, a veil, hiding the way to fellowship with God, because only, when it was torn in his suffering and death, the blood of Christ was shed and the atonement for our sins accomplished. Thereby the new, living way leading to God was laid open and made accessible, so that now whosoever will, may approach God and enter into His fellowship. The author says that way is a

living one, because in reality Jesus Christ is himself the way; fellowship with him is fellowship with God. He is it in virtue of his atoning sacrifice, which in his suffering and death he offered to God for our sins. In this fundamental truth the whole of the testimony of the apostles perfectly agrees with Christ's own words that, according to the will of God, and through his atoning sufferings and death, he has become and will for ever continue to be the personal way to the supreme good. This is, indeed, already implied in the fact that the essence of the supreme good of Christianity consists in fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.

That our sins have been atoned for in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, and that in him, the crucified and risen Lord, the way to God's fellowship has been effectively opened, is a fact testified by the Bible; it is also a fact of our experience of salvation, and among truly believing Christians there is no difference of opinion on this point. On the question of how this atonement was effected by the sacrifice of Jesus, and why such a sacrifice was necessary, different theories have been set forth at different times in the Christian Church, and even now the controversy is by no means finally settled. But it is no part of our task to enter into it here. It is the province of Christian dogmatics to discuss the rationale. We are here concerned only with the practical question, *viz.*, how is man, on his part, to enter upon this way prepared by God?

## 2. MAN'S ENTRANCE TO THAT WAY.

If the kingdom of God is offered to man as a gift of God's grace, because Jesus Christ has, by his sufferings and death, removed the obstacle, sin, and opened the way to fellowship with God, the only thing necessary on the part of man is to respond to God's invitation and to accept the divine gift with

humble gratitude. This is all that is required of man in the Bible.

#### THE DEMAND OF FAITH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

This demand appears already in the Old Testament in a beautiful form. It had always been an expressed or unexpressed requisition, that, if God condescended to enter into relations with men, they should listen to His word, believe His promises, and accept His gifts. Therefore Abraham's faith was so acceptable to God: "And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. xv, 6). Because Israel did not believe and again and again began to murmur in doubt, God's judgements came upon the people in the desert. And unbelief, which would neither listen to God's promises nor accept the present blessings of the kingdom of God, rendered it so hard for the people of Israel to listen to God's commandments and to walk in His ways.

Therefore, while promising the highest salvation for the time to come, the prophets also proclaim the most urgent invitation to accept that salvation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (Is. lv, 1—3). In figurative language, so easy of comprehension by eastern minds, the prophet offers the highest blessings, the sure mercies of the eternal covenant promised to David, *i. e.*, the mercies of the everlasting kingdom of God in its consummation. To obtain and enjoy them no payment whatever is required; they are given to man unconditionally. He has nothing to do but to come,

to listen, and to receive. The biblical conception of faith appears here distinctly and beautifully: it is first of all listening to God's promises and then accepting what is offered in them. Of course, man must *come*, which always implies separation from old surroundings and habits, and turning to God and His blessings. But that is not a condition brought to it from without, still less a demand for meritorious works, but something included in the acceptance of the offered gift of salvation. And it is a thing, which is possible for every one to do: the poorest, the weakest, the most ignorant and lost are still able to accept the divine blessing.

#### REPENTANCE AND FAITH REQUIRED BY JESUS.

It is practically the same thing, when Jesus in the New Testament unites with the message of the kingdom of God that is nigh at hand the exhortation: "Repent ye and believe in the gospel!" (Mark i, 14. 15). 'Repent ye', that means really 'change your mind'. The mind of the natural man is directed to the good things of this world, which are most closely connected with sin, and which in his thoughts and wishes take the place which is due to God. Instead of seeking after God, man with his selfish mind longs for these perishable and often sinful things. That is his chief sin. The coming of the kingdom of God is in itself the strongest conceivable invitation to the sinner to turn away from those things, and with all his desires and aspirations to turn to God and the blessings of His kingdom. It is this invitation to which Christ gives expression; this is the conversion which he demands.

Considered from another point of view it is this: "Believe in the gospel." In the gospel, the glad tidings proclaimed by Christ, the coming of the kingdom of God is made known, and that kingdom is offered to men in the name of God. By listening to this message, by obeying it and accepting the kingdom of God with the fulness of its salvation, they accomplish the repentance required of them. Repentance or conver-

sion is therefore turning away from the world, its transitory benefits and enjoyments and from its sinful thoughts, aspirations, life and deeds, and turning to God and His eternal benefits and blessings. As these are proclaimed and offered, that living faith, by which the kingdom of God is to be received, is wrought in him who opens his heart to the gospel. It is evident that nothing more is required of man but what is indispensable in the nature of things, and what even those that have sunk deepest are able to do.

The same demand appears in the preaching of Jesus under different names, which however always come to that one point, that man must turn from the world and its sinful ways to the God of holy love, who in the kingdom of God will give him his life and fellowship. Thus Jesus often says that men should come to him, *i.e.*, trust him and join him as the Messiah in whom the kingdom of God is come: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matth. xi, 28). And he calls those blessed, who have come to him, because in uniting with him they have become partakers in the blessings of the kingdom of God (Luke vi, 20—23; x, 23. 24. Matth. v, 1—12; xiii, 16. 17). This appears equally in the first three gospels and in the gospel of St. John. Here, too, Jesus calls repentance or conversion, which includes faith, coming to him: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John vi, 35).

Coming to Jesus is turning to God, who in Christ has visited his people and offers his salvation and life to them. And whosoever truly unites with him, cannot possibly continue to live in sin and worldliness. For some time there may still be weakness and folly in the disciples of Jesus, but it is impossible to cling consciously to sin in his fellowship. Whosoever does so will soon slide back and no longer walk with him (John vi, 66). Or such a branch will be cut off and thrown into the fire, like the traitor among his disciples (John vi, 70. 71; xv, 2. 6). Thus to come to Jesus means full conversion,

including the faith which receives the supreme good of the kingdom of God. In brief, beautiful words Christ states this fact in the face of a turbulent, doubting, questioning crowd of listeners, at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the temple of Jerusalem: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John VII, 37. 38). As in Is. LV, 1—3 so also here the blessings of the kingdom of God are compared to fresh, refreshing water. In order to obtain this lasting refreshment and satisfaction men need only come and drink. Then they will not only receive in full abundance, but also be enabled to convey the same blessing to others. Coming and drinking means nothing but faith, which unites with Christ and receives the blessings of the kingdom of God present in him. In this way, according to the testimony of Jesus, man is to enter the divinely prepared way to the kingdom of God, and accept the free gift of salvation by an act of simple faith.

In describing the supreme good we have pointed out that it is a moral good, wherefore sacred moral duties are connected with it. Believers are to fulfil the highest commandment of perfect love to God and practical love to their neighbours, and in fulfilling it, to do the holy will of God, the Father in Heaven. But the remarkable thing, which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions, is this, that the fulfilment of this sacred universal duty is not the condition for obtaining the supreme good, but that it is to grow, and in fact does grow, as a fruit out of the salvation which the believer has received. These results are both demanded and wrought by the gift of salvation. But they are in no way a condition of obtaining it, as if the kingdom of God would be given as a reward for them. And even if they grow out of it as fruits, they never partake of the nature of merit. They are only that which the owner of the field, having sown the seed, has a well-founded right to expect and to claim. For entering into the kingdom of heaven, for obtaining the supreme good, the only thing required

of man is simple faith, trusting in the promise of God in Jesus Christ and accepting what is offered in him.

#### ST. PAUL'S TEACHING CONCERNING FAITH.

The apostles testify the same thing on the score of their own experience. St. Paul especially is the apostle of faith. In direct opposition to meritorious works he teaches justification by faith. This is the logical consequence of his doctrine of sin, which is likewise based on his own experience. If all men without distinction are condemned as sinners, and if man is a sinner in his whole nature, he cannot by his own works deserve or merit the righteousness before God in which salvation consists. For his best works are tainted with sin and have no value before God. Therefore in the gospel, the glad tidings of the crucified and risen Christ, there 'is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith' (Rom. i, 17). Righteousness of God means that righteousness agreeing with the will of God and pleasing to God, that righteousness which is given to him that believes as a free gift of God. Compare Phil. iii, 9: 'The righteousness, which is of God.' This righteousness is revealed 'by faith', *i.e.*, in such a way, that on the part of man the reason why righteousness is given him, is faith alone; and 'unto faith', *i.e.*, for the purpose of faith, so that the revelation of this righteousness in the preaching of the gospel by the apostles is calculated to create faith. From this the great, decisive importance of faith is evident, as it was already alluded to in the saying of the prophet Habakkuk (ii, 4): "The just shall live by his faith." Therefore the gospel, which reveals this righteousness and which demands and creates such faith, is 'a power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth' (Rom. i, 16). Both from his opposition to works and from his positive statements, it is here already clear what faith is according to the apostle: faith is the act by which man receives and appropriates the righteousness of God, which is offered to him, and which includes all salvation.



But the righteousness of God is revealed and offered in Christ Jesus, wherefore St. Paul designates the faith which receives it, as faith in Jesus Christ: "But now apart from the law a righteousness from God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe" (Rom. iii, 21. 22). Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Son of God, or God himself, who delivered him up for our trespasses and raised him for our justification, is therefore, according to St. Paul, the real object of faith. By receiving him and clinging to him the believer receives the gift of righteousness and with it admission to fellowship with God (Rom. iv, 25; x, 9. 10).

It is therefore a matter of course, but also again and again emphasized by the apostle, that the righteousness of God imparted by justification is a free gift of His grace: "There is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii, 22—24). But if redemption is a gift of grace, faith, which is required on the part of man, is only the mental act by which he receives this gift. If it were more, grace would be grace no longer, but must give way to merit. But man sold under sin would not be able to fulfil such a demand. Or if it were less, for instance, simply accepting a doctrine as true, man would not be benefited by it, because he would not become a partaker of the righteousness of God: "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace" (Rom. iv, 16). The direct consequence, the immediate effect, of justification is reconciliation with God (Rom. v, 9—11. 2 Cor. v, 18—21). In connection with the latter passage the apostle calls upon his readers: "Be ye reconciled to God", which follows from the arrangements God has made to reconcile the world to Himself. On account of this work of God man on his part is to endeavour to get out of the state of enmity against God into the state of reconciliation, which we may say is sonship and fellowship with God. But on the part of man nothing is required for this

purpose but faith, which the apostle puts in the foreground in all his epistles. What God has prepared by His reconciling work in the suffering and death of Jesus, that man is now to accept by faith. Faith, as the simple act of receiving God's gracious gifts, is the only way to salvation.

We have already alluded to the origin of faith: God works faith in man by the preaching of His word, in which His vivifying spirit works. Both Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul, each in his own way, point out this fact. Thus faith is entirely the work of God, the effect of His Spirit and His word: 'that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God' (1 Cor. II, 5). The gospel is the power of God to those that are saved, because it creates faith (Rom. I, 16. 17). On the other hand, faith is also required of man, and is said to be a work which God demands of him. "What must we do, that we may work the works of (or required by) God?" the Jews ask Jesus. And his answer is: "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John VII, 28. 29). It is, indeed, in contradistinction to the many works contemplated by the Jews, that Jesus here says, that faith, which is in reality no work, is the one work which God requires of man. But the demand of faith pervades the whole New Testament, both the teaching of Jesus and that of the apostles. Compare, for instance, Acts II, 38; III, 19; XVII, 30. 31—passages which, in demanding conversion, always at the same time demand faith; for faith, which receives God's salvation, is wholly God's work and wholly man's doing. Without man's surrendering himself with his whole heart to the word and Spirit of God, there can be no faith and no experience of salvation.

It remains yet to point out that in faith, as emphasized by St. Paul, all that is otherwise called repentance or conversion is included. For, according to St. Paul's teaching, faith can only arise from the experience that man is dead in sin and unable to gain righteousness by his efforts. This implies the deepest knowledge of the corruption of sin, and also resistance against, and turning away from, sin. At the same time this experience

of the power and corruption of sin leads to the energetic resolution to abstain from all attempts of obtaining salvation by man's own strength and efforts. With this the apostle has also given up those selfish aspirations after glory before God and men, which are the most subtle manifestations of sin. With him conversion was what he describes in Philippians III, 7—11: "Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . . Not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Before the apostle became a believer in Christ, his gain was his own righteousness, which besides giving him the privilege of belonging to the party of the pious in Israel, the Pharisees, was his glory and his pride. This he has renounced once for all, in order to obtain salvation in Christ by humble faith. This was his conversion; in this he turned his back upon sin and the world. That the apostle assumes essentially the same thing to take place in every believer, that he believes this to be included in every fundamental act of faith, is evident from the fact that he considers union with Christ as a process of dying and rising with him. Whosoever has been baptised into Christ, has been baptised into his death, and therefore has died with him and is dead to sin, so that he can no longer live in sin (Rom. vi, 1—14. Col. III, 1—3).

The same thing he expresses in yet another form: "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof." Thus they have completely broken with sin, they are dead to it. That is involved in their having become believers in Christ. Faith, according to the apostle, includes in itself that perfect change of mind and life which is otherwise called conversion. But the gift of righteousness, of reconciliation, and reception into the sonship and fellowship of God is not obtained by conversion, but by faith, which confidently and trustingly receives the gracious gifts of God.

It is not by mere chance that the apostle who so earnestly preaches salvation by grace and through faith is the apostle of the Gentiles. St. Chrysostom observes with regard to a passage in the epistle to the Romans, that the apostle by teaching justification through faith opened the door of the kingdom of God to all the world. But in this also Jesus himself had taken the lead. He came to call sinners into the kingdom of God, to seek and save what is lost (Matt. ix, 13. Luke xix, 10). And he calls to himself all those who are weary and heavy laden. This is connected with the fact that in him the kingdom of God is offered as a gracious gift, he himself opening the way to fellowship with God, for free, unconditional admission through the sacrifice of his suffering and death, so that on the part of man nothing is required but to come and take. Whosoever comes to him is not cast out but received (John vi, 37). And after his death and resurrection he commands his disciples to carry the message of it not only to the lands of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, but also to the ends of the earth: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. xxviii, 19. Luke xxiv, 47. Acts i, 8). The way to eternal salvation by faith is equally accessible to every nation and to all men. It is in the nature of things that none are excluded, that all are invited to enter into the kingdom of God by that way.

St. Paul, who in the most definite form taught the way of salvation by faith, was also called upon to carry the message of salvation of grace through faith to the heathen. Therefore he felt himself a debtor to the Greeks, who were at that time the representatives of civilisation; to the Barbarians, who lacked the accomplishments of education; to the wise, who had acquired the culture of the age; and to the unwise, who lacked it. They all need this one gift of righteousness before God and fellowship with Him; to all the way is open; and therefore the apostle was called by God and felt in duty bound to invite all, and to establish among all nations the obedience of faith (Rom. i, 5. 14). Because in Christ

Jesus salvation is given to all unconditionally, therefore it is for all without exception, and Christianity therefore is the universal religion.

#### ST. PETER'S AND ST. JOHN'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING FAITH.

It only remains for us to state briefly that the two other chief apostles, St. Peter and St. John, bear testimony to the same facts. In reminding his readers of the great change which separated their pre-Christian from their Christian life, Peter says: "For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls" (1 Peter II, 25). The shepherd and bishop of their souls is the crucified and risen Christ. By coming back to him as lost sheep, by turning to him and uniting with him, they have been healed from the disease of their sin, and have become partakers of the inheritance of the kingdom of God preserved for them in heaven. The same act of conversion and believing union with Christ is here described which we found in the words of Jesus and the testimony of St. Paul. St. Peter says explicitly that by this he means faith: "You, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter I, 5). By the same faith by which they have come to Christ they are kept with him, so that, when he comes again, they may partake of the final, perfect salvation in the kingdom of God. Thus according to St. Peter man enters by faith into the possession of the highest salvation in the way prepared by God.

It is the same with St. John when he writes in his gospel, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John xx, 31). What the apostle wants to effect by his gospel is not only the intellectual assent to the assertion that Jesus is the Messiah, but the faith which receives and has that divine, eternal life which is offered in Christ Jesus, the son of God. With St. John divine truth is always received in the inward experience of fellowship with God. The first epistle of St.

John was written with a view to awaken and strengthen faith in his readers. "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John v, 13). Because they have faith, he can assure his readers that in and with that faith they have eternal life. But that they may have faith and be strengthened in their faith the apostle declares to them the word of life (1 John i, 1—4). Also according to his testimony, the supreme good, life eternal in the fellowship of God and Jesus Christ, is given to faith through grace. Thus the way to obtain the supreme good, is distinctly and harmoniously declared in the Bible. And this testimony is, in virtue of the Spirit of God working in it, of such a nature, that it works faith, if man in simplicity and confidence opens his mind and heart to it.

### 3. RETROSPECT AND CONCLUSION.

To the confusing plurality of ways of liberation in philosophic Hinduism, which even Śāṅkara cannot reduce to one, Christianity opposes the only way of salvation by faith. God is one, His salvation is one for all men, and the way to it is only one. The plurality of ways in Hinduism leads to doubt, and of itself is sufficient proof that these ways are all futile. The fact that Christianity offers only one way of salvation must from the very beginning produce the impression that this is the true way of salvation. As there is only one moral law and one moral order of the universe for all men, so there can be only one way to fellowship with the one, true God. This is the first feature in which the victorious superiority of the Christian way of salvation reveals itself as compared with philosophic Hinduism. The second, and even more important point of superiority is the fact that the way

of salvation in Christianity is faith on the part of man, and grace on the part of God. Philosophic Hinduism in the Bhagavadgītā and through Śāṅkara also postulates the grace of God for the attainment of liberation, or at least of the knowledge that leads to it. But as grace can only be sought from a personal God, and the idea of a personal God in Hinduism belongs to the sphere of unreal existence and mere illusion, that postulate remains unfulfilled, and becomes indirectly a testimony to the truth of the Christian way of salvation. According to Christianity God with His grace comes to meet man, and that not only half way, but the whole length of the way. The way of grace and faith is perfectly adapted to the actual condition of man as experienced by all. Man is a sinner and can do nothing for his own salvation, but accept it as God's gift. And even the most hopelessly lost sinner is capable of that; for God's grace seeks him in the very place where he finds himself lost, miserable, and weak; and if he only accepts that grace, it leads him to eternal salvation by the living way which is embodied in Christ Jesus. In a word: in Christianity it is God who saves sinful man. According to philosophic Hinduism man must save himself, either by meritorious and disinterested works, or by religious exercises, or by self-acquired knowledge.

In its highest development philosophic Hinduism rejects the first two ways, as belonging to the sphere of unreal, delusive existence. But if philosophic Hinduism is to show the way of knowledge, its wisdom fails it, according to Śāṅkara's own declaration. In order to obtain liberation, man is to acquire wisdom, the knowledge of the absolute Brahman, and yet the Vedānta is unable to tell him how this is to be brought about. In Christianity the way of faith and grace in Christ Jesus appears in its full glory and truth; and every man is invited to try it by his own experience. We Christians know, from real experience, that God out of grace, for the sake of Christ and through Christ, vouchsafes us forgiveness of sin, fellowship with Himself and divine, everlasting life.

Lastly the way of grace and faith is a way for all, for the sinner as well as the comparatively righteous man, for the educated and the uneducated, for the virtuous and for those that have sunk to the lowest depth of degradation, if only they are willing, in humble recognition of their sin and need, to bow their heads and accept the gracious gift of God. No nation, no class, no man is excluded on principle. Only he, who in pride and unbelief excludes himself, remains outside the kingdom of God in everlasting perdition. With the way of liberation in philosophic Hinduism it is quite different. In the Upanishads and in the Vedānta the lower castes from the Śūdras down to the Chāṇḍālas are explicitly and purposely excluded from liberating knowledge. Only the Brahmans, perhaps also the other Āryan castes, are admitted to the liberating knowledge of the Brahman. As a matter of course foreign nations are of necessity excluded from liberation. With regard to this it is inconsistent and useless for modern Śūdras and possibly also Brahmans to deny this fact. The only legitimate authority of appeal is the sacred books of Hinduism, whose definite, unqualified statements cannot be explained away by ingenious interpretation and text-torturing devices. This patent fact alone would be sufficient to show that the way of philosophic Hinduism to liberation is not the way of God, and not based on divine truth.

The practical attitude of philosophic Hinduism has at all times been strictly in accordance with this fact. The lower castes and the great mass of the ignorant were always left to their ignorance, superstition, and degradation. And as yet the Neo-Vedāntist movement has not seen its way to effect a change in this state of things. 'Swāmi Vivekānanda may have preached his Vedānta wisdom to audiences composed of American ladies or Indian students; but he did not preach it to the ignorant, superstitious, idolatrous masses of his own land. Of course, he had good reasons for it; his wisdom could hardly be made comprehensible to them. It is the same with the rest of the emissaries of Neo-Hinduism. They



flatter themselves, and try to persuade the world at large, that Neo-Hinduism is a universal religion, because one or two of its adherents have gone to western countries to lecture on the Vedānta before a few men and women, satiated with western culture and victims of a despondent pessimism. Why do not these emissaries of Neo-Hinduism go to the Eskimos of Greenland or the black peoples of Africa? or at least to the Pariahs and other depressed races of their own land?

There are more answers than one to this question. One only need be mentioned arising from the nature of things as they are: this Neo-Vedānta wisdom is not for the poorest of the poor, they cannot comprehend it, it will never be possible to impart it to them. In order to obtain the liberating knowledge of philosophic Hinduism, a man must be able to read and understand the Upanishads and other Sanskrit documents. How many of the Neo-Hinduist emissaries are themselves able to do so? And which of their western pupils will ever attain to it? This amount of scholarship will always be accessible to only a very few. Now can that be the way revealed by God for the attainment of the supreme good, of eternal salvation?

The Christian Church, true to the salvation entrusted to her, to her way of salvation, and her divine calling, has from the very beginning always preached the gospel of salvation by faith to all human creatures, and invited all nations to fellowship with God in Christ. And to-day more than ever her messengers go out into all the world, to make disciples of, and to lead into the kingdom of God, even the most degraded races of mankind. The most undeveloped languages must lend themselves to be transform'd into vessels for the message of salvation in Christ. And all nations, the Eskimos, the Africans, the red Indians and the Pariahs of India, as well as highly educated Indians, Chinese and Japanese learn the supreme good to be 'the kingdom of God', and receive it by simple faith in Christ. This is in itself a sufficient proof of the divine truth of Christianity.

Here also the result of our comparative study is negative with regard to philosophic Hinduism: its way of salvation is not for all men, and therefore it cannot be from God. And that was the result with regard to all the points which have been the subject of our comparative study. Only occasionally an anticipation of truth flashes through a mass of error, like a star in a dark night. There would be no hope or profit in discussing this labyrinth of speculation thus in detail, were there not the divine assurance of something infinitely better to be obtained, *viz.*, true salvation of our souls in Christ Jesus. There is yet another consolation which has come again and again to us in the course of the present study. The Indian sages may have wandered on very dangerous tracks far away from the truth of God, but they earnestly sought after God and longed for salvation, in union with Him. And we believe that among modern Hindus also there are many honest hearts yearning for true salvation and eternal life. For such as these the revelation of God, as embodied in the Bible, contains a promise the fulfilment of which every believing Christian expects with the fullest assurance: "The poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water" (Is. xli, 17. 18).

THE END.

# ERRATA.

Page	32	verse 5	omit comma before 'might'.
"	34	line 34	read 'meath' for 'meat'.
"	39	" 29 "	'background' for 'back ground'.
"	42	" 18 "	'Sūryā, Sūrya's sister'.
"	53	" 35	omit comma before 'Rigveda'.
"	62	lines 26, 32, and p. 63 line 1	read 'Dyaushpitar'.
"	77	last line	read 'Rigveda III, 6, 9'.
"	97	line 17	read 'If' for 'if'.
"	100	" 19 "	'far' for 'iar'.
"	105	" 33 "	'Prašna Up. V, 2'.
"	127	" 22 "	'on' for 'to'.
"	194	last line	put comma between 8 and 9.
"	210	first line	read 'Brahmā'.
"	278	line 13	read 'of the biblical account'.
"	283	" 7	omit comma.
"	do.	" 8	put full stop for interrogation sign.
"	319	first line	omit comma after 'artistic'.
"	322	last line	read 'fruit of works'.
"	327	line 17	read 'to make so much fuss about' for 'to heed'.
"	371	" 22 "	'nineteenth' for 'eighteenth'.
"	376	first line	read 'thy life' for 'the life'.
"	378	line 5	insert 'But' before 'Carlyle'.
"	417	" 9	insert 'they try' after 'Veda'.
"	460	" 13	read 'those' for 'these'.
"	469	" 5 "	'crystalline' for 'chrySTALLine'.





